National Education in Ireland.

LETTERS

BY

Dr. WILLIAM A. M'KEOWN

ON

Irish National Education.

ITS RUIN BY CLERICALISM.

THE ENGLISH EDUCATION BILL AND IRELAND.

INDICTMENT OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF NATIONAL EDUCATION

AND OF THE MANAGERS OF SCHOOLS.

SUGGESTIONS FOR REFORM.

Illustrated by Plates of Irish National Schools, American Schools, and English Board Schools.

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PREFACE.

THERE has been a remarkable sequence of events which are almost certain to bring about revolutionary changes in education. I summarize them—the agitation for a R. C. University, culminating in the Royal Commission—the appointment of that Commission, consisting of members the majority of whom are notable partisans; the remarkable evidence, showing the ignorance and incompetence of clerical managers of schools, and the total want of teachers of elementary science in Ireland—the refusal by the Commission to hear the evidence of well-informed and able men like Mr. F. H. O'Donnell, which led that gentleman to write his book on the "Ruin of Education in Ireland," and his letters, which constitute the ablest indictment of clericalism published for a long time—Mr. M'Carthy's sensational books: "Five Years in Ireland," and "The Priests and the People,"—the introduction of the English Education Bill without any mandate from the people—the popular rage and indignation in England and Wales of about one-half of the population, who consider they have been betrayed by the Government—the terrible denunciation of the clerical managers of National Schools in Ireland by the Resident Commissioner of National Education in Ireland—and the exposure of the character of the education in the Irish National Schools. We have here, linked together, practically a series of events which will make the condition of Irish education, under clerical rule, a potent factor in showing the damnable effects of clericalism in education—a warning also to the English people that they should give no controlling power in their education to the clerics and their henchmen. Mr. Balfour's clerical attitude, and his wilful disregard of the sound principle that those who pay should rule, is, sooner or later, certain to destroy the present Government. We have had in Ireland, for seventy years, a so-called National System of Education which, if honestly carried out, would certainly have made the Irish people the best educated of the United Kingdom. That system, by the connivance of Dublin Castle and the conspiracy of the Churches, has been so manipulated as to be used not for the promotion of Secular Education but as a sort of fulcrum or

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aid for clerical objects. The education of the children has been so directed by clerical agencies that they are not fit to enter on the battle of life in competition with the children of other countries. Mr. Balfour was evidently so well pleased with the results of clerical rule of Primary Education in Ireland that he proposed to extend its blessings to University Education in Ireland, and to rivet eccleciastical chains on the ratepayers of England in support of wretched, dying Voluntary Schools. But the unexpected has happened. He appointed a Commission packed with supporters of clerical ascendency in education; but I do not suppose that any Commission so appointed has had such damning evidence or elicited such outspoken denunciation of clericalism in education. The very supporters of it, such as Bishop O'Dwyer and Bishop Clancy, exposing their ignorance and incompetence, have unwittingly been its most powerful enemies. The undisguised partisanship of the Commission, their refusal of evidence by able and independent men, have covered them with contempt and ridicule. That Commission, however, has done this immense service—it has brought under public notice the disgraceful condition of Primary Education in Ireland under long-continued clerical control, and makes one ask what can possibly have induced the present Government, with such appalling evidence of the evils of clerical control in education in Ireland, to give to denominational schools State and rate support, and recognition in England and Wales? This is the more unpardonable as Mr. Balfour, a Scotchman, should be well aware that the Churches in Scotland have nothing whatever to do with the control of Primary Education, and that perfect local control by the ratepayers all over Scotland has resulted in making the Scotch, as a whole, by far the most educated people of the United Kingdom. It has been my opinion from the first that this University Commission would open up the whole question from the Primary Schools to the University, and that it would tend eventually to the destruction of this pernicious clerical rule, and to the honest control of Secular Education by the public authorities.

I have been accused in the public Press, and privately, of being animated by the most anti-clerical spirit. I make no apologies or excuses. I take this opportunity of saying that the Churches are in a false position, and that they have no right to assume the sole or chief direction of Secular Education, and that if they get hard knocks to oust them from a position they have no right to occupy, they have themselves to blame. I may say for myself that I consider religious education a most important department of education, that it should have a high position, and that the clergy of all the Churches should take charge of the Religious Education of the young, and not entrust it to secular teachers.

I have been requested to publish in pamphlet form the various letters and statements which I have contributed to the Press since February last. In all the letters I have endeavoured to confine myself to facts which could not be disputed, and to the clear, legitimate inferences. I consider no public question at the present time as of so much importance as securing for the rising generation the very best Primary Education, and for that the prime essentials are :—School buildings, with all the necessary equipment and appurtenances, the very best trained teachers, and a strong local educational opinion which will, at all costs, secure education of all the children.

I append a number of photos of some of the schools in Belfast. They are only samples of schools too common all over Ireland. I append also, for comparison, some prints of Schools in the United States of America, and of English Board Schools. I might multiply indefinitely plates of the schools of the world, and they would only emphasize the fact that Ireland is in a shameful educational position. Who is to blame ?

WILLIAM A. M'KEOWN.

20 College Square E.,
Belfast, 1st December, 1902.

LETTERS BY DR. M'KEOWN

ON

IRISH NATIONAL EDUCATION AND ALLIED SUBJECTS.

Letter I.

Sanitation of Belfast National Schools.

GREAT OVER-CROWDING.

APPALLING SANITARY CONDITION.

A Small Beginning.

I observe in a short paragraph in the local Press that a meeting of the School Attendance Committee was held on Monday, the 17th February, 1902, at which the Rev. Father Crickard, Rev. William M'Kean, Mr. Charles M'Lorinan, J.P.; and Mr. John Malcolm were present, and that "The Secretary was instructed to write to the Members of Parliament for the City requesting them to support a Bill amending the Irish Education Act in several respects." I have little doubt that the amendments these gentlemen propose would be very desirable; but it would seem to me that the amendment of an Irish Education Act is a matter of too much importance to be initiated and directed by the School Attendance Committee of the Belfast Corporation. Besides, no petty peddling with Primary Education should at present be tolerated—radical reform is necessary from bottom to top.

Radical Reform Necessary.

The School Attendance Committee are entitled to the thanks of the community for their gratuitous labours in endeavouring to compel parents to send their children to school; care should, however, be taken that the schools are of such a character from a sanitary point of view that the children forced to attend will not suffer in health.

The sanitary condition of the schools is a matter of the most urgent public importance, and demands the immediate attention of the Corporation and the community.

Excessive Overcrowding

I have before me a list of 72 schools in Belfast in which in 1899 the average daily attendance was in excess of the accommodation, such as it was.

Average daily attendance in 72 schools	13,698
School accommodation, allowing 7 to 8 square feet floor space for each child	11,659
Excess of average attendance over accommodation	2,039

Of course frequently the attendance is greatly in excess of the average. In some cases the overcrowding is extremely high. The following are extreme cases:—

Average Attendance		Accommodation.
180	...	106
141	...	89
370	...	268
209	...	133
166	...	95

The mode of estimating the accommodation is rather primitive. If the height of ceilings, character of the ventilation, and time of instruction were taken into account, the sanitary condition of some of these schools would be found to be appalling.

Appalling Sanitary Condition

In the year 1899 there were 282 national schools in Belfast. Since that time 11 new schools have been erected, 4 of them being in substitution for old buildings. Whether the 4 replace any in my list I do not know.

The 72 schools are only a small number out of the total of the schools which any sanitary authority would condemn as unhealthy.

I have been informed by a gentleman who is obliged in an official capacity to visit National Schools that the atmosphere is so offensive in some of them he is glad to get out of them. Now, children are obliged to live in this pestilential atmosphere four or five hours daily for five days in the week, and what is the result? Certainly, impairment of the general health, the induction of scrofulous and tubercular disease, great liability to infectious and contagious diseases, and, as regards mental power, sluggishness, stupidity, and a want of capacity to profit adequately by instruction. It would be interesting to know the mortality amongst the children attending these schools. When it is taken into account that many of these children are poorly fed and clad, living in miserable homes, great sympathy for their sad plight cannot fail to be aroused, followed I hope, by quick and effective action. What we find in Belfast will be found elsewhere in Ireland. *(a)*

Danger to Health and Life in Schools.

I have inspected many of these schools from the outside, and, whether one regards the size, the appearance, the position, the want of playgrounds, &c., they are a disgrace to the city. I may note here that every man and woman is entitled to visit every national school and inspect it, but not to interfere in the work of the school.

Belfast Schools a disgrace to the City.

Under the circumstances I have indicated above, apathy and inaction by the Corporation and people would be nothing short of criminal. I think the course is clear. 1st. The Corporation should request the Commissioners of Education not to make any more grants of money to replace old schools, or to build new petty schools, or to recognise any more small non-vested schools *(b)*.

Belfast Corporation should take action.

(*a*) After the publication of this letter several of my medical confreres spoke to me and told me that to their knowledge Typhoid Fever and Diphtheria could be directly attributed to a school in the centre of the City, and managed by a Clergyman of one of the most influential Protestant Churches in Belfast Another Medical Doctor told me that he had noticed a large increase of skin affections within the last few years, and he considered this largely owing to the condition of the schools. Another, a gentleman of very large experience, told me that he had female teachers under his care who were simply sick through the disgusting sanitary arrangements of their school, and the obligations imposed on them of doing common scavenger work.

(*b*) In letter No. 10 it will appear from my later investigations that the Commissioners of National Education have made during the 70 years of the existence of the National system very few grants for building schools for the reasons made evident in that letter.

2nd. That the Corporaton should take means to close up a number of small unsanitary schools, and, either directly or through committees preliminary to establishment of school boards, secure the building of several large schools in substitution, with ample playgrounds. The Board of Education has power to make grants. *(c)* 3rd. As working people are chiefly concerned, the Trades Council and their representatives in the Corporation should urge this matter. 4th. The Corporation should appoint, as in Germany, a school doctor, at, say, £500 per annum, whose sole occupation should be to visit and inspect the schools from a sanitary point of view, trace the pupils who are ill, and have a general supervision as regards ventilation, light, &c. Money could not be better spent. Surely when such care is taken for sanitary arrangements for cattle, is it not too much to ask for at least similar attention to the children in schools.

School Doctor.

Relative care of the cattle and children by the Legislature.

We have heard a great deal about University Education in Ireland, which only concerns now about 4,000 persons; but primary education, affecting an estimated number of 905,004 children, between the ages of 5 and 13, inclusive, is immensely more important. Whilst I have confined this letter to the question of the sanitary condition of schools, I may indicate in a few words the vast importance of other questions relating to primary education, which perhaps I may find time later on to deal with. (1) Has the National Board of Education shown itself competent in its management of primary education? (2) Has the grabbing of the management of the schools by churches, through the apathy of the laity, been good either for education or the churches? (3) Is the position of teachers, either financially or otherwise, such as to induce men and women of ability at present to enter the teaching profession?—Yours, &c.,

Primary Education vastly mo e important than University.

Various queries

WILLIAM A. M'KEOWN.

20, College Square East, Belfast,
19th February, 1902.

(*c*) It is clear that this course can be taken immediately without any new legislation.

Letter II.

Sanitation of National Schools in Ireland.

GROSS OVERCROWDING IN BELFAST SCHOOLS.

"LANCET" COMMISSIONERS' REPORT ON DUBLIN SCHOOLS.

NEGLECT OF THE COMMISSIONERS OF NATIONAL EDUCATION.

In the concluding paragraph of my letter which appeared in your paper of the 20th inst. I led your readers to understand that I would probably deal with several questions, amongst them being whether the National Board of Education had shown itself competent in the management of primary education. This subject is a wide one, and I will now only take up one branch of it—viz., whether they have shown themselves to be possessed of a knowledge of the requirements of sanitary science and a due regard for the health and lives of the hundreds of thousands of the children in their schools.

Incompetence of National Board.

Any person with the most elementary knowledge of sanitation knows that 8 square feet of floor space for each child is miserably inadequate. Suppose the height of the ceiling were 12 feet, each child would have 96 cubic feet of space, and if 15 feet 120 cubic feet. Now, educational authorities and physiologists regard 500 cubic feet of space as the minimum for each child, but, in addition, "it is essential to remember that the air needs changing six times per head per hour in order to allow the requisite 3,000 cubic feet per hour, and thus prevent the room smelling 'stuffy.'" In our climate, however, it is not always possible to have absolute perfection in change of air, but each school should have at least such ventilation as to afford three changes of air per hour.

Air space in National School quite insufficient.

500 cubic feet for each should be the minimum

I will now take the five extreme cases of overcrowding mentioned in my former letter and contrast the cubic feet which each child has in a room 12 feet high with what it ought to have, reckoning only on the average attendance.

Gross cases of overcrowding.

	Average Attendance.		Accommodation.
School A	180	...	106
„ B	141	...	89
„ C	370	...	268
„ D	209	...	133
„ E	166	...	95

COMPARISON OF ACTUAL SPACE FOR EACH CHILD, WITH THE NECESSARY 500 CUBIC FEET.

School A.—Each child has only 51 cubic feet instead of 500—i.e., one-tenth.
School B.—Each child has only 60 cubic feet instead of 500—i.e., one-eighth.
School C.—Each child has only 69 cubic feet instead of 500—i.e., one-seventh.
School D.—Each child has only 60 cubic feet instead of 500—i.e., one-eighth.
School E.—Each child has only 55 cubic feet instead of 500—i.e., one-ninth.

Indictment of the Commissioners of National Education.

Is it possible, that, during the whole existence of the National Board, out of all the bishops, archbishops, clergymen, judges, &c., there was not one who knew what a first year's student of physiology would know, and what is pretty well known generally to persons of less distinction than the Commissioners?

Wilful neglect.

Mere ignorance may be pardoned, but wilful neglect of numerous warnings cannot be. The head inspectors and district inspectors of the National Schools, much to their credit, have drawn the attention of the Board to overcrowding and other sanitary defects repeatedly, but apparently without inducing the Board to take the drastic measures the urgency of the case demanded. *(a)*

Charges against the Commissioners by the Inspectors.

In support of this statement I cull a few extracts from reports made to the Commissioners in 1898 by seventeen inspectors in different parts of Ireland:—

"The Commissioners should not tolerate schools without offices."

"A large part of the sickness of children is brought on by badly-ventilated schools, combined with want of warmth in wet and cold weather."

"The school is often a cold, cheerless apartment."

"Children quiet, melancholy, and miserable-looking."

"Schools helplessly overcrowded."

"A glaring defect is the condition of the out offices."

"Offensive alike both to health and decency."

About one school there is the following report:—"Filthy condition of offices" in 1895. "Same in 1896." At the end of 1897, "matters worse than ever in that respect."

"I have often gone into a school where, after remaining only a few minutes, I have had a bad headache from having been obliged to breathe a foul, unventilated air. Is it a matter of surprise that in such schools the pupils become languid, inattentive, unreceptive, and that the teacher finds himself at the end of the day completely exhausted?"

"Half a dozen schools which would bring reproach on a district."

"Wretched hovels," "imperfectly lighted, more imperfectly ventilated, provided with neither offices nor playgrounds."

"Playgrounds more like a pen for domestic animals than a place of recreation for young people."

(*a*) The Commissioners take care to print in strong type at the head of the published Reports of their Inspectors the following notice:—

"The Commissioners desire it to be distinctly understood that they do not hold themselves responsible for the opinions expressed in these Reports, nor do they feel called upon to adopt any suggestions they may contain."

The last part of the notice has been honoured by its most strict religious observance.

Charges by the "Lancet" Commissioner against Dublin Schools.

The "Lancet" sent a special Commissioner to investigate the sanitary condition of Dublin, and his report will be found in that journal for the year 1900. He investigated the condition of two National Schools, and his description is shocking. He reports of one:—"Schoolrooms dark and ill-ventilated; gas burning in the daytime; no recreation ground; no break from ten till two o'clock; no lavatory for the boys; manure heaps against walls of school; dark brown liquid manure oozing from it, forming stagnant pools, saturating unpaved, porous ground; emanations drawn into school; garbage, dust heaps, black mud, fish heads, offal, &c., in the lanes and yards about."

Verminous and filthy condition of children from Industrial Schools.

He reports, further, that "the children coming from schools, especially the industrial schools—where they have been boarders and under the control of the teachers—are often covered with vermin and caked with dirt." *(a)*

How, may I ask, can the Commissioners justify their toleration of all these shocking things?

It may be asked what is the state of matters in general at the present time? Is there any reason to believe that there is any material change? A sanitary association in Dublin which met last week referred to the unsanitary condition of the National Schools of Dublin, and to the efforts made by the Council of the Association to bring pressure on the National Board to improve them.

Demand for healthy schools for 900,000 Irish children.

To my mind the matter is of such national importance it should be brought before Parliament, and that Parliament should require the Government to investigate the matter to the very bottom by independent investigators from Whitehall, and if the facts be found as stated the control and direction of primary education should be entrusted to persons more alive to the grave responsibility of their position than the present or past Commissioners. In fact, there should be a Minister of Education for Ireland. Surely the 900,000 young helpless Irish school children are entitled to more consideration from the Government than the Boer women and children in the concentration camps, who suffer from their own ignorance and filthy habits.

The Public Health Committee and the sects.

I am glad to learn that the Public Health Committee of the Belfast Corporation are taking action. It does seem too bad that a municipal body and its overwrought officials should be obliged to interpose to secure regard for health of children in institutions, either owned or controlled by a corporate body established by the Government, entrusted with a great national duty, and having managers, inspectors, and teachers under its absolute control. I presume the managers visit these unsanitary schools frequently to look after "the faith and morals" and the "higher interests" of both teachers and pupils. I wonder whether they have eyes or noses capable of detecting these foul things so offensive to the sight and smell, and so graphically described by the inspectors of the schools and by the "Lancet" Commissioner?

Do managers visit schools?

It is obvious that the sooner the people generally take an interest in and control the schools the better it will be for the community.—Yours, &c.,

WILLIAM A. M'KEOWN.

20, College Square East, Belfast,
February 28, 1902.

(*a*) This clause refers to children inmates of Industrial Schools sent to neighbouring National Schools for Elementary Education.

Letter III.

Unsanitary National Schools in Ireland.

PRIMARY EDUCATION RUINED BY SECTARIAN INFLUENCES.

BRITISH GOVERNMENT PRIMARILY TO BLAME.

A condemnation of Public Health Committee, Belfast Corporation.

The public have reason to be greatly disappointed that the Belfast Corporation do not seem to realise the magnitude of the question of the sanitary condition of the schools, and that, in fact, it is not a mere local question, but one of national importance. One of the most important duties of the general of an army is to see to the health of his troops, for sick men are not much use in battle. So with the school-children; ill and stupid from a poisonous atmosphere, they cannot learn as they ought. No charge has been made against the Corporation nor the Health Committee, but against the National Board of Education and the managers of schools. For the future, however, if the Corporation do not take sufficient action the public will, I hope, hold it accountable.

I have not acted in this matter in any haphazard way, but on evidence that cannot be controverted. The interests of the community are deeply involved, and the fullest investigation is imperatively demanded. The following is copy of an official return made by the National Board of Education, to which I have referred in my letters:—

LIST OF SEVENTY-TWO NATIONAL SCHOOLS IN THE CITY OF BELFAST, IN WHICH THE AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE EXCEEDS THE NUMBER FOR WHICH THERE IS SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION, ALLOWING EIGHT SQUARE FEET OF FLOOR SPACE FOR EACH CHILD:—

(I omit the list of overcrowded schools, as it is a matter of merely local interest).

National Commissioners without sanitary knowledge.

I am glad to learn that three of the schools have been closed, and that some new schools have been built. That is not enough. The Commissioners' return does not show the magnitude of the evil. That can only be estimated by taking, not the average attendance, but the maximum attendance and the total number of children on the rolls. Let the Health Committee, then, ascertain these particulars for each of these schools during the four quarters of the year 1901, and publish the result of their inquiries.

The Public Health Committee cannot hereafter shelter itself under the National Board of Education. That Board has shown itself ignorant of the most elementary knowledge of sanitation, and has failed to take heed to the warnings of its inspectors.

My first letter was confined to the question of overcrowding, but the letter of a teacher signed "A Disciple of Kingsley" *(a)*, and my second letter raised the question of sanitation generally, and a return now in relation to overcrowding would fall far short of the requirements. To judge the merits of the whole question it is necessary to have the following particulars:—

1st—The total number of children on the Rolls.

2nd—The total number of children for whom accommodation should be provided.

3rd—The number and dimensions of the schoolrooms and class-rooms.

4th—The cubic space for each child on the day of maximum attendance.

5th—The condition of the out-offices.

6th—The water supply for drinking and flushing purposes, and whether from the main or cisterns.

7th—The ventilation, lighting, and heating.

8th—The accommodation for overclothing in wet weather.

9th—The condition of the floors, benches, forms, and windows.

10th—Whether children with verminous and contagious complaints are allowed to attend school.

11th—Whether there is or is not a playground for each school, and, if so, the extent.

Primary Education ruined by sectarianism

British Government primarily to blame.

As I indicated in my first letter, the sanitation of the schools is only a part of the very large question of primary education. It is my belief that primary education in Ireland has been ruined by sectarian influences. I will deal with this question hereafter. The British Government is primarily to blame. Instead of being guided by the sound principle that the nation should make provision for the education of all its children, and likewise insist that every child should be educated, and that parents and guardians should be held responsible for the faithful discharge of their duty, the Government delegated its functions to a board constituted of persons nominated on account of the profession of some form of religion, and not because they have either the time, the desire, or the necessary knowledge, and with disastrous results. After Spain, Italy, Turkey, and Russia, Ireland is the most illiterate country in Europe. The education in National Schools is greatly inferior to what it was forty years ago. The teachers' position is degrading, and their income has been so reduced that no person with any forethought would encourage one of his family to engage in the teaching profession. The parental responsibility has been disregarded and abrogated, and, on pretence of guarding "faith and morals," has been assumed as a general rule by the clergy, who cannot be prosecuted for neglect of their assumed obligations.

Degradation of the teachers' position.

(*a*) See Appendix—Letter signed "A Disciple of Kingsley."

Degradation of Primary Education in Ireland so complete Dr. O'Dwyer wishes to extend it to University Education.

Bishop O'Dwyer advanced as an argument for the sectarianising of university education the fact that primary education was already almost purely sectarian. I think the results of sectarian management of primary education in Ireland are a powerful argument in favour of the abolition of the National Board and the whole system of National School Management, and against committing to the Churches and their nominees the guardianship and control of university education.—Yours, &c.,

WILLIAM A. M'KEOWN.

20, College Square East, Belfast,
4th March, 1902.

Letter IV.

Unsanitary National Schools in Ireland.

DAMNING REPORTS BY INSPECTORS.

SCOTCH AND IRISH PRIMARY EDUCATION—A CONTRAST.

From the prominence now given to the question of the unsanitary condition of the National Schools of Ireland it is safe to assume that the Government and the local authorities will be obliged to take measures to ensure that education shall be conducted in schools not dangerous to health and life. To form an idea of the prevalence and degree of the evil it is only necessary to consult the reports of the Inspectors of National Schools appended to the annual reports of the National Board of Education for a number of years past, and which may be had from his Majesty's printers at a trifling cost. I would direct attention specially to a report, dated January, 1900, relating to the Newtownards District, which includes a part of Belfast, in which the following passage occurs:—"After what has been said as to the character of many of the houses and premises, it is not to be wondered at if sickness prevails to a large extent and epidemics spread rapidly. The usual childish ailments, of course, recur, and gastric diseases, moreover, are extremely common. The Ballymacarrett District is low-lying, and not an easy place to drain thoroughly, but the schoolhouses, no doubt, help the work of disease. I can count up fourteen monitors who have retired through ill-health, and have, I imagine, all since died. Two young monitresses employed in an overcrowded school have died within little more than a year." If out of such a small body as the monitors in one district sixteen have retired, and probably died, what has been the rate of the sickness and mortality amongst the pupils, and especially the infants? It is shocking to think that the most helpless and the most susceptible to illness and epidemic influences are the most subjected to unsanitary conditions. For the infant schools and the schools with departments for infants are the most overcrowded of all, and the little ones are kept immured in a pestilential atmosphere, receiving little or no real education, and without anything to cheer or interest them. What has been said regarding the Newtownards District might doubtless be applied to the greater part of Ireland, and if so what a waste of child life there must be in Ireland. Assuming, then, that a very large number, if not the majority, of Irish National Schools are not fit places for the education of children, it may be asked what are the features which a good school should possess. It should be situate in a dry, open space, should have plenty of sunlight and fresh air, ample cubic space for the maximum attendance of children, efficient ventilation and heating arrangements, a large classroom, with several small rooms for different classes, a suitable place for hanging hats and overcoats, ample lavatory accommodation and playgrounds, with shelters large enough to

Sickness, epidemics, and death from the Primary Schools

No real Education—the killing of children in a pestilential atmosphere.

Features of a good school.

permit of the ordinary games, sports, and drill in wet weather. To what extent education is influenced for good or for evil by the character of the school buildings and equipment is not commonly estimated, but in general as is the school so will be the teaching. It would be as reasonable to expect a first class sea captain to take the command of a hulk as a first class teacher, unless compelled by dire necessity, to take charge of schools such as we have in Ireland. Children should learn at school in addition to the three R.s, tidiness, cleanliness, order, method, punctuality, good manners, good taste. These as a rule will not be acquired in dark, dirty, stuffy, fetid, noisy, disorderly, badly or inefficiently officered schoolhouses. Schools bright, well ventilated, comfortable, with spacious playgrounds, having teachers endowed with the gift of imparting instruction in an interesting way, attract pupils, and do much to encourage regularity in attendance. If schools are not provided with a number of classrooms there is a perfect babel of noise and a continuous disturbance of one class by another, which renders efficient teaching and discipline perfectly impossible. In addition to having good schools, it is essential to have good teachers, and to have good teachers it is necessary to take means to give to them adequate training, and to offer such inducements, financial and otherwise, as to attract capable persons to the teaching profession. Some educationalists in this country are in the habit, and rightly so, of referring to Scotland as an exemplar of everything good in education. One would imagine, however, from their actions that to name Scotland should be quite enough to reach perfection, for they do not do as the Scotch do, but follow Irish ways and expect Scotch results. I will now contrast Scotland and Ireland in educational affairs in regard to the schools, the teachers, and the management.

The fetid schools of Ireland

Necessity for class rooms.

Good schools and good teachers required.

Scotland.

For upwards of two centuries parish schoolmasters (and every parish by law was obliged to provide a school and schoolmaster) had a good social position, and were regarded by the community as practically on a level with the parish clergyman. They were very often men of university education, quite competent to prepare students for the universities. The relationship between the clergy and the parish schoolmaster was most harmonious, and is beautifully described by "Ian M'Laren" in the "Bonnie Briar Bush." The teachers were elected by the landowners in conjunction with the parish minister, and were paid an annual salary by a levy on

Ireland.

Comparison of Scotland and Ireland.

Previous to the establishment of the National Board the only primary education in Ireland was that in schools established by State-aided proselytising societies or in the hedge schools regarded as illegal by the State. Under the National Board the teachers, from a number of circumstances, have never had the same position as the teachers of the parish schools of Scotland. The laity, from want of education and of an intelligent interest and zeal for education, so characteristic of the Scotch, instead of directing and controlling elementary education themselves, neglected their duty, and allowed the various Churches to take possession of the schools,

Inferior social position of Irish School-masters.

Irish teachers slaves of managers.

landowners, and held office for life on good behaviour. In 1803 an Act was passed by which the landowners were bound, in addition, to furnish a suitable house and a fenced garden. The schoolmaster was a freeholder, a servant of the public, and an independent man. In these early times the government of the schools was democratic.

and to make the teachers the servants and slaves of the managers of schools—a mistake most injurious to the best interests of the country.

Scotch teachers emancipated from clerical rule.

Notwithstanding the harmonious relationship between the teachers, the landowners, and the parish clergymen (who were the superintendents of the parish schools), and the good position of the teachers and the superior character of the education, an Act of Parliament was passed in 1872, by which the parish schools and certain other schools were transferred to popularly elected Boards, called School Boards. The Scotch people saw that the parish authorities were not able to meet the educational necessities of large towns and cities, and hence the Act was a necessity. Since that time education has advanced with rapid strides in every respect, in the building of large and commodious schools, in the steady increase of highly trained teachers, and in the development of primary education on a higher plane.

In Ireland the movement has been in exactly the opposite direction. The position of the teachers has become more and more degraded. Ecclesiastical control has been more and more rivetted on lay education. The number of petty, ill-equipped schools established to promote clerical interests has been increasing from year to year. The character of the education of the schools, instead of becoming higher, as in all other civilised countries, has been becoming lower and lower for the last forty years, until now pupils who have completed their primary education are not even fit to take advantage of the technical schools at present being established in Ireland.

Irish teachers perfectly enslaved.

Rapid advance of education in Scotland under School Boards.

Rapid decline in Ireland under clerical rule.

In Scotland, smallest Parish independent.

In Scotland the School Board of the smallest parish can take the initiative in extending buildings, adding new branches of study,

In Ireland there are no School Boards. All local authorities, even of our large cities, are perfectly powerless.

In Ireland, largest cities powerless.

(a) The following paragraph from the "Haddingtonshire Courier," to which I would direct Mr. Arthur Balfour's and Mr Haldane's attention, gives an idea of the business-like way in which education is directed in Scotland by small School Boards:—

"DIRLETON, SCHOOL BOARD.—A meeting of this Board was held on Thursday of last week Present—Messrs. Higgins, Gracie, Kerr, and Thomson. Offers for the alterations on Kingston school, necessitated by the overcrowding of the class-room, were submitted, and that of Messrs. Malcolm & Sons, East Linton, authorised to be accepted, subject to the final approval of the Scotch Education Department. A circular from the Association for Inspection of Religious Instruction in Schools was submitted, and was allowed to lie on the table. The Board had under consideration a circular from the Scotch Education Department anent the Youthful Offenders' Act of last session. It was ordered to be circulated among the Board's teachers. It was resolved that if a sufficient number of pupils indicated their willingness to join a shorthand class in Gullane next winter, to establish the same with a grant from the County Technical Education Committee."

appointing teachers of new departments, and in borrowing money on the security of the rates for all these purposes *(a)*.

In Scotland the income of the teachers has been steadily increasing, so that the teaching profession draws to it in increasing numbers highly educated men and women. I find from the calendars of the Glasgow, Aberdeen, and St. Andrew's Universities there are no less than 1,161 of their graduates described as teachers, and resident chiefly in Scotland. I have not information as to the number of teachers who are graduates of the Edinboro' University. Average income of the principal male teachers is £173, and of male assistants, £108. Every teacher has a prospect of advancement. The head teachers of the principal schools have salaries varying from £300 to £500.

In Scotland, teachers' salaries increasing

In Ireland the average incomes of the teachers have been always very much smaller than those of the Scotch teachers with like qualifications, and recent regulations have had the effect of reducing them, and will still further reduce them. The teaching profession is attracting fewer and fewer well-educated men and women. Very few university graduates teach in the primary schools. With the small emoluments and the semi-menial position of national teachers, it seems rather a matter for ridicule that the Commissioners of Education should state in their report:—"Special facilities are now afforded to university graduates to enter our service as teachers."

In Ireland, diminishing.

The average income of the principal male teachers under the scheme recently abolished was £98, and of assistants £63. Under the scheme now in operation the time has been too short to admit of any estimate of averages, but it is certain that the old averages will be considerably reduced. A male principal teacher can only reach a salary of £175 per annum, after 36 years' faultless service. The wisdom of the present Board of Education may be judged by the fact that there is no inducement now for a teacher to go from a small school to a better one, as he is only entitled to receive on such change the salary which he received in the smaller school. For example, should an

assistant in a school succeed to the principalship of another school, he will only receive his former salary.

In Scotland, teachers only do teachers' duty.

In Scotland the teacher has only to do his duty to the public as a teacher, and is sure of appreciation. He has time to study for his work, extraneous duties are not imposed on him, his whole salary is really his own, and not subject to deductions of various kinds. He is never obliged to buy his position by payment of money, or promise of payment of money, or of services outside his duties as a teacher.

In Ireland, teacher often obliged to buy his place, and perform many extraneous duties and pay for many things.

In Ireland the teacher is often obliged to purchase from the manager his appointment, at a price ranging from £10 to £50, or to arrange to pay inordinate church dues as a consideration, and to execute at his own cost necessary repairs and improvements in the school. He may be required to attend, with his family and family connections, the church of the clerical manager, and to act gratuitously as precentor, organist, clerk of the church session, and stipend collector; also to teach in the Sunday school, and assist at prayer meetings. *(a)* The teacher is called upon in many instances to pay for the cleaning of the school, to provide for the children various small school requisites, to get up bazaars, or beg money for repairs, and even to borrow money for extension of premises, and to pay the interest *(b)*. It would be interesting to know how much of the small salary remains for a teacher's family after meeting these diverse claims. After submitting to all these extortions and extraneous and sometimes semi-menial services, he holds his position at the mercy of a clerical auto-

I may note here the remarkable fact that whilst in Scotland, before the School Board Act, the ("heritors") the ratepayers appointed the teachers, the parish clergyman, the manager, could dismiss on moral grounds, and that, too, without appeal. Under the proposed present English Education Act it is the parson and his friends who appoint the teachers, and their judgment can only be disputed by the Educational Authority on the ground of competence. I would like to know what authority or what person could on any legal investigation prove want of competence except in the grossest cases. So the teachers most accommodating for church purposes may be appointed without fear of dismissal, though their appointment may cause intense parish disturbance and hatred.

(*a*) See extract from letter in appendix by Mr. David Elliott, B.A., dated 23rd September, 1902, which appeared in "Belfast News-Letter." See extract from letter signed "An Old Teacher" which appeared in "Northern Whig" 2nd May, 1902.

(*b*) I know of an instance where the teachers in a non-vested school under clerical management borrowed £500 for extension of the school through the Board of Works, for which they are obliged to pay the interest although they might be dismissed by the manager at once.

crat, or a more important person still, the autocrat's wife, and may be dismissed summarily without any redress whatever, and without a prospect of securing a situation in any clerically ruled school in Ireland. The National teachers of Ireland are the most downtrodden class of the whole community.

In Scotland, peace,

In Ireland, rebellion.

In Scotland there is practically no friction whatever between the School Boards and the teachers.

In Ireland there is widespread rebellion, either open or covert, by the teachers against clerical management.

Contrast of schools, teacher, and pupils, in Scotland and Ireland.

I extract the following from the reports of the Scotch Education Department for 1900 and 1901:—

Schools (including higher grade schools)	3,623
Certificated teachers	10,845
Average attendance	629,038
Children on rolls	756,658

I extract the following from the Irish Commissioners' report for 1900:—

Schools in operation	8,684
There were in addition 468 schools not in operation.	
Principal and assistants (exclusive of teachers in 352 convent and monastery schools)	12,875
Average attendance	478,224
Children on rolls	770,622

Schools in Ireland double those in Scotland, though attendance smaller.

These figures prove that whilst the average attendance of pupils in Ireland is 24 per cent. less than that of Scotland, the number of National Schools (exclusive of monastery and convent schools) is more than double the number of the public schools of Scotland, and the teachers of Irish National Schools exceed in number considerably the teachers of Scotch public schools. The inference to be drawn is, I think, that there are a great many petty, unnecessary schools in Ireland, and too many teachers, and a corresponding waste of public money, and that a consolidation of schools under local government would lead to a great increase of efficiency and at the same time to considerable economy. (I may note that one inspector in his report states that there are in a village in his district, with 450 inhabitants, four schools—one in connection with each Church.)

87 per cent. schools in Scotland under School Board.

In Scotland 87 per cent. of the schools are under the control of the School Boards, the majority of the remaining 13 per cent. being owned by the Churches.

89 per cent. in Ireland under clerical management.

In Ireland 89 per cent. of the schools are under clerical control, and only 11 per cent. under lay management. A proportion almost exactly the reverse of that shown by the Scotch statistics.

It is an interesting fact that the Free Church of Scotland, which, after the Disruption in 1843, established schools of its own, has handed over its schools (only 8 exceptions remaining in 1898) to the School Boards. The Presbyterian clergymen, in their ministerial capacity, have nothing whatever to do with any lay education in Scotland, primary, secondary, technical, or university, and only have the ordinary rights of citizens.

Free Church of Scotland handed over their schools to School Boards, why should not the English Ritualists do the same or sell the schools?

In Scotland illiteracy, as shown in 1897 by the Marriage Register, was 2.16 per cent. for men, and 3.27 per cent. for women.

In Ireland illiteracy, as shown by the Marriage Register, was 15.1 per cent. for men, and 13.2 for women.

William A. M'Keown.

20, College Square East, Belfast,
17th April, 1902.

Letter V.

The National Schools of Ireland.

COMPARISON OF IRELAND AND SCOTLAND CONTINUED.

TRAINED AND UNTRAINED TEACHERS.

LAVISH EXPENDITURE OF PUBLIC MONEY ON PRIMARY EDUCATION IN IRELAND.

I think it well to amplify somewhat the contrast between Scotland and Ireland and to analyse more particularly the statistics contained in my letter of the 17th inst. It appears from that letter there were in Scotland 10,845 certificated teachers (in addition to pupil teachers) for an average attendance of 629,038 pupils, being in the proportion of one certificated teacher for every 58 children. The Scotch Education Department remarks with satisfaction a tendency towards a reduction in the number of pupil teachers, and a probable increase in the number of adult teachers. In Ireland the number of principal and assistant teachers in the service of the Board was 12,875. This includes 947 work-mistresses, industrial teachers' and junior and temporary assistants, so that the ordinary school teachers number 11,928.

The following table gives details of the number of teachers in the service of the National Board and the average attendance in the different classes of schools:—

	Teachers.	Average attendance.
Ordinary Schools	11,928	395,932
Convent and Monastery Schools, paid by classification		9,629
Model Schools		6,547
Workhouse Schools	(particulars wanting)	3,757
248 Convent and 3 Monastery Schools, paid by capitation	(particulars wanting)	62,359
		478,224

Statistics of teaching in Ireland.

There is no specific information in relation to the teaching power of the 248 convent and 3 monastery schools, but we may ascertain what it may be approximately by the rule of proportion. There are 34·5 pupils for each teacher in the first three classes of schools. On the same ratio there would be 109 teachers in the workhouse and 1,807 in the monastery and convent schools paid by capitation. As there are 275 lay assistants in some convents, there would remain 1,532 of the religious orders. The total teaching power, exclusive of pupil teachers, monitors, and monitresses, work-mistresses, and industrial teachers, would be, therefore, 13,844. It is rather strange in investigating a system of

Teachers in Monastery and Convent Schools

National Education in a civilised country to be obliged to make such a calculation. Monastery and Convent Schools are too sacred institutions to admit of State or lay inquiry.

The reader will note that whilst there is one certificated teacher for every 58 pupils in Scotland, there is one teacher of some sort for every 34.5 in Ireland. In other words, for the same number of pupils nearly double the number of teachers is supplied in Ireland.

QUALITY OF THE TEACHERS.

Competence of Scotch Teachers.

The Scotch educationalists, with their practical common-sense, recognise that persons entrusted with the great national work of primary education, should be competent, and have insisted on the requisite education and training of teachers. Hence in the Scotch Education Act of 1872 it is provided that every principal teacher of a school must be a holder of a certificate of competency, or have some equivalent qualification, as, for example, a degree of a Scotch University. Scotch educationalists have not only not endeavoured to evade the act, whittle it away or make it subserve other interests than the educational, but have, on the contrary, given it full force and effect, and strained it to the utmost to promote educational efficiency. Hence the Scotch are in the proud and advantageous position of having practically all the principals and assistants trained and certificated, and of being far and away the best educated people of the United Kingdom. Even the illiteracy which I recorded in my letter is not really Scotch, but in a large degree an imported illiteracy.

Irish incompetence.

Irish educationalists stand at the opposite pole. They recognise ignorant, untrained youths as quite competent to undertake the delicate, onerous national task of developing the youthful brain and body, they have too often by every means used their position to subserve petty sectarian interests hostile to educational interests, and notwithstanding the existence in Ireland of a National Board of Education for 70 years, with lavish endowments, have too well succeeded in keeping the Irish, a most brilliant people, the most uneducated of the British Isles.

70 years of Irish National Education ruled by clerics

I appeal now to facts to sustain this none too flattering criticism.

From the report of the National Board of Education of Ireland for 1900 I obtain the following figures, either directly or by calculation:—

Classification of Irish Teachers.

Trained teachers	6,026
Untrained	5,902
Estimated number of teachers belonging to religious orders in 248 convents and three monasteries; teaching qualification not stated	1,532
Lay assistants in these schools	275
Estimated number of teachers in workhouses; qualifications not stated	109
	13,844

In addition there are 178 pupil teachers in the model schools and 4,140 monitors in the ordinary and model schools.

To sum up these speaking statistics, there were in Ireland certainly 5,902 principals and assistants absolutely untrained, and 1,916 of whose competence neither the public nor the Government have any evidence whatever, and only a few of whom are likely to have had any training. My calculation will not be materially vitiated by assuming that only a small number of the 7,818 could be regarded in any way as equivalent to the trained teachers. It is not possible to make an accurate calculation from the defective educational returns, but it may be regarded as certain that about a quarter of a million of the Irish children reckoned in the average attendance are educated by persons of whose competence we have no guarantee whatever.

Untrained Teachers in Ireland.

A quarter of a million Irish children taught by untrained teachers.

FUNDS FOR THE SUPPORT OF EDUCATION IN SCOTLAND AND IRELAND RESPECTIVELY—A CONTRAST.

It is not necessary to give details of the sources of the different grants for primary education, but the following summaries will, I think, be found absolutely correct:—

Scotch grants and rates for education.

	Scotland.	Ireland.
Parliamentary grants for an average attendance of 629,038 pupils in Scotland.....	£696,607 6 8	
Parliamentary grants for an average attendance of 478,224 in Ireland		£1,145,721 8 0
Equivalent for each child from State sources	1 2 4	2 8 5½
Amount raised from rates	923,358 0 0	*Nil.*
Amount raised from local sources, including subscriptions for teachers and towards repairs of schools, and children's school pence		77,993 6 11
Equivalent for each child from rates and local sources respectively	1 9 4	0 3 3½
Total for each child	2 11 8	2 11 9

Excessive parliamentary grants for Irish education.

These bald figures are of a significance of the highest import, and raise a number of questions which not only the Irish people but the Legislature will have to face.

If the parliamentary grants for Ireland were the same per child in Ireland as in Scotland the sum payable for the year 1900 would be £534,016 16s instead of £1,145,721 8s—in other words, Ireland has received £611,704 12s more than it should have received. If we apply the doctrine of equality—the levelling up or the levelling down policy—which is such a favourite with certain ecclesiastics in Ireland, Scotland should have had £827,495 3s 1d for that year more than it has received, or Ireland £611,704 12s less.

Compared with Scotland Ireland receives annually £611,704 in excess.

The annual excess received by Ireland for primary education would support ten Trinity Colleges or thirty Royal Universities.

Is it possible that our worthy Government is ignorant of this remarkable state of affairs, and that this excessive grant for Irish primary education is an indirect sop

Bribe to the Priests.

or bribe to conciliate or purchase what Mr. F. H. O'Donnell in his book on "The Ruin of Education in Ireland," aptly describes as the "Irish Fanar," only paralleled in Turkey so long as a couple of generations ago.

I have read with interest in a Belfast morning paper letters by the Rev. J. D. Craig Houston and Mr. Samuel Johnston questioning some of the statements in my letter of the 17th inst. I would point out that I am not dealing with a small part of Ireland, but with the whole, nor with the doings of any one sect or section of the population. In my researches and inquiries in relation to university affairs information unsolicited, unexpected, and startling has reached me, and generally from perfectly uninterested sources. I have regarded all information in a questioning and thoroughly sceptical spirit, and after due deliberation I summarised as accurately as I could what seemed to me the facts. That, in such a large subject, affecting a whole country and so many diverse, conflicting interests, I might have been led astray would not be strange. I, however, have to say that I see no reason to modify anything I have written. As to the payment to certain managers of schools, I have had information from no less than six different sources in no way connected with each other.* I decline for obvious reasons, though I can do so, to specify either place or person. I will not pillory any individual. I deal with a pernicious, demoralising system which leads to abuses undermining the national character, and diminishing the capacity of Ireland to take its rightful place amongst civilised nations.

Corrupt traffic in schools by the clergy.

I hope that the Government will be forced to appoint a real impartial lay Royal Commission in the interest of the education of the 900,000 neglected school children of Ireland, whose prospects are blighted by the rule of a rampant, selfish, State-fostered clericalism. Whether or not I succeed in making an unanswerable case for such an investigation the public will determine.

State-fostered clericalism blights education.

I propose in my next letter showing the educational results from this lavish expenditure of public money.—Your obedient servant,

WILLIAM A. M'KEOWN.

20, College Square East, Belfast,
25th April, 1902.

* See in appendix letter dated 24th October, 1901, published in the "Northern Whig," and signed "An Irish Roman Catholic." I obviously cannot give particulars about information I have from other sources.

Letter VI.

The English Education Bill.

RELATIONS OF THE STATE AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO PRIMARY EDUCATION IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES.

PRIMARY EDUCATION IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES FREE FROM CLERICAL RULE.

CLERICAL RULE OF PRIMARY EDUCATION EXISTS ONLY IN ENGLAND AND IRELAND.

HOW "THE RELIGIOUS QUESTION" IS MET IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES.

Dangers of English Education Bill to Ireland.

The present Education Bill under discussion in Parliament is one of such a character as to demand the very closest examination by Irish members of Parliament, city and county councils, and by the Irish people without distinction of creed or politcs. Should it be extended to Ireland in its present form it would be well-nigh ruinous. The plain object of this Bill, which can be only called clerical, is to charge the ratepayers with the maintenance of the teachers of sectarian schools without any control by the ratepayers, and to make the representatives of the people the humble servants of Churches and clerically-minded cliques. It will be evident to anyone acquainted with the real state of primary education in Ireland that there has been a gross waste of public funds, that in any reorganisation of the national system of education large sums will be required to make education even moderately efficient; and the question arises where is the money to come from? England and Scotland will object, and rightly so, to any more money being granted to Ireland for national education. The country is covered with petty schools, Church schools, schools of religious orders, over which the public have no control whatever. Will the ratepayers of Ireland, as is proposed in England, be called upon to support all these petty and sectarian schools? I hope to show that it is the duty of every Irish member of Parliament to strenuously oppose this Bil as it now stands.

Will ratepayers have yet to support the petty and sectarian voluntary schools of Ireland.

I would draw the attention of the public to the care with which the Government has dealt with the demand for a Roman Catholic University in Ireland, and contrast it with their conduct in relation to this Bill. After reiterated demands of the Roman Catholic clergy of Ireland for a Roman Catholic University, the Conservative Government, through its Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, in February,

1897, addressed a circular to her Majesty's representatives in Europe and America, requesting that they should obtain and forward to him, for the information of the House of Commons, a report on the provision made for the University Education of Roman Catholics, with special reference to the constitution of the universities, the amount of their endowments, the sources from which they have been derived, and the relation of the universities to the episcopate. In July, 1899, this request of the Prime Minister was supplemented by a circular from Mr. Chamberlain, Colonial Secretary, to the Governors of nine British Colonies. Official reports were presented to both Houses of Parliament in March, 1900, and finally a Royal Commission was appointed to inquire into the whole question of university, higher, and technical education, and has held several long sittings. These official reports have been of incalculable service. One may reasonably ask why such an admirable precedent has not been followed in relation to the momentous question of primary education—a question really affecting in a most marked way the future position of the British Empire—before proposing any legislation whatever. Is it that the members of the present Government and our legislators generally are so well informed as to the experience of foreign Governments, far ahead of us in education, that they could gain nothing by inquiry, or is it that the present Government, put into office because of the Boer War and the threatened danger of Home Rule for Ireland, has tried to carry out partisan legislation before the public came to be aware that this Government is wire-pulled by combined parsonical influences, High Church Episcopal, Roman Catholic, and Jesuitical, and that the whole proceeding is a clerical conspiracy against the rights of the laity, and betokens the opinion of his Majesty's Government that the representatives of the people are not competent to manage education, and that the parents of the children are so forgetful of their parental duties that they cannot be trusted to see that the teachers are safe, moral, and religious instructors. Fortunately, however, some information is available.

Suppression of information by Government as to primary education in foreign countries.

Is the rushing of the Bill a clerical conspiracy against lay rights.

If anyone apply to his Majesty's printers, Messrs. Eyre & Spottiswoode, he will find books containing long essays on educational subjects by experts. I have a few of them published in the present year dealing with Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, Belgium, Holland, Portugal, Hungary, Servia, Japan, Prussia, Saxony, Rhineland, and France. They are very interesting, but very ponderous, and require a considerable time for their study and analysis. They contain, however, facts of the most valuable character, an account of the practice of different countries, and the results of educational measures, which should be known to all who engage in the discussion of this Bill. The chief questions which will arise are—The relations of the State, of local representative bodies, and of the Churches to primary education; the sources of the funds for primary education—how much to be derived from the State, how much from the local authorities, how much from the pupils; by whom should the teachers be appointed and dismissed; what should be the position of the teacher in relation to tenure of office, salary, pension; what provision should be made for religious instruction.

No notice of valuable reports * either in Parliament or the English Press, though these were published in May.

*It is remarkable that the public Press of Great Britain and Ireland only began to comment on these reports after the close of Parliament in Summer. I had them at the end of May. How is it that our legislators knew nothing of these Reports during the debates in Parliament before the prorogation

An analysis of the practice of different States would be quite too long for a letter, but from an examination of these official reports published by the Board of Education, I would say the scheme proposed by the Government for the improvement of primary education in England is a narrow, paltry, inefficient measure, in no sense national, and is an indication that in educational matters in some respects our present Government has not reached a higher stage of development than various other countries reached, at any rate, half a century since. As to the relations of the State and the Church to education, surely the Government is aware that the civil power of the civilised world (except in England and Ireland) has virtually abolished clerical rule of schools, and in the United States that rule never existed. In all countries in which education has been widely extended, and really good and utilitarian in a broad sense, the local authorities, by whatever name called, have had entrusted to them the provision of the schools and their general supervision, management, and maintenance, under, of course, a supreme central authority. The local authorities bear by far the largest share of the expense of primary education, and the State a small share, but, of course, there are wide variations in different countries, and sometimes in different provinces of the same country. It must be admitted that, as a rule, local authorities have shown themselves worthy of the trust committed to them. They have built and equipped magnificent schools, and maintained them in a high state of efficiency. The very highest efficiency of education co-exists always with local monetary rate support, local control, and local interest, and local pride and patriotism. The relative contributions of the State and of local authorities is at the present time of great interest and importance, in view of parliamentary discussion. The following are the particulars for a few countries:—

Present Government at least half a century behind the times.

Clerical rule o education only exists in England and Ireland.

Relations of the States and local authorities to education.

	Contributions by the State.	By Localities.
Prussia.....	16 per cent for towns	69 per cent.
	39 per cent. for country.	42 per cent.
Belgium.....	41.6 per cent.	46.2 per cent.
Holland.....	£824,666 (in 1897).	£916,416.
Sweden.....	About ¼th.	About ¾ths.
Norway.....	2,124,260 kroner.	7,980,998 kroner.

It is a sound principle to stimulate local interest by local taxation.

On a general survey of the action of the different States in relation to voluntary primary schools, it is clear that these schools met with little favour either by the States or by the local authorities, and when they are tolerated they receive either no State or local authority support, or very little. They are evidently regarded as institutions to be closely watched and not entitled to confidence as educational agencies. They are absolutely prohibited in Germany. They are tolerated in Holland, and subsidised to the extent of 6 or 8 per cent. of the amount of the teachers' salaries, but all teachers must have the qualifications prescribed by the State. They are likewise tolerated in Belgium, and may be subsidised by the communes at their pleasure, but only a few contribute. All the

Voluntary schools in foreign countries receive little favour.

teachers must have the approval of the authorities. The fact is, the voluntary primary schools in Belgium are supported by collections at the Churches on Sundays and feast days. The policy of other countries except Great Britain and Ireland is the same with rare and unimportant exceptions.

The relation of the State to religious orders.

The question of the relation of the State to religious Orders is one of the most vital importance in view of the number already in this country and of the present influx from France. What will happen in England under this new Bill? Will these teaching Orders be permitted to establish schools or to teach in schools established for them, and claim support from the rates under this Bill? If so, the Roman Catholic lay teachers will soon be expelled from the schools, and they and their families will have their bread and butter taken out of their mouth. Men and women in communities can live very cheaply, and heads of families have no chance in competition. This danger is no mere fanciful one. A head teacher in Sligo was dismissed by a Catholic priest manager a few years ago, without any reason assigned, to make way for the Marist Brothers, and I am informed that in one diocese in Ireland the bishop is supplanting all the ordinary teachers by members of this Order. The laity will require to be vigilant to protect their interests against the aggression of all these teaching Orders—male and female. The destruction of the worldly prospects of the mere laymen and laywomen is not of much importance in the eyes of the Church when the policy, interest, and power of the Church are concerned.

Supplanting of ordinary National School teachers by religious orders.

Action of foreign countries on the religious question.

In Belgium, Rhineland, Holland,

Different plans have been adopted in different countries to meet the religious question. In Belgium the children go to chapel for their religious duties before school hours. In Belgian cities one will see the children coming from the cathedrals and chapels before the school hour—eight o'clock in the morning. The same may be seen in Rhineland. In Holland the teaching of religion has been for a long time entrusted everywhere to the ministers of the various communions, and in the time-table a certain number of hours are set apart during which the schoolhouses are at the disposal of the clergy. In certain places the schools close early to give the children an opportunity to go to church for religious instruction.

Amsterdam, Cologne, Germany.

In Amsterdam, for example, the schools close at twelve o'clock on Wednesdays and Saturdays for this purpose. The same practice is followed in Cologne—a Catholic city of Germany. In Germany the schools in rural districts are generally denominational, but the authorities provide the school, appoint and pay the teachers—in other words, the State recognises the religion of the people, but recognises no Church authority whatever. I am sure the people of these countries who strongly object to giving any power to Churches over secular education and secular teachers will willingly grant to the clergy every reasonable facility as in Germany, Belgium, and Holland for giving religious instruction in the schools and Churches. Indeed, religious instruction should be specialised and given by those most competent to impart it.

It may be taken as an axiom that without good teachers there will be no good teaching, and to have a good supply of competent teachers there must be sufficient inducements. The following description of the position and prospects of the

Prussian teacher is interesting:—"As soon as a teacher receives a definite appointment he becomes a civil servant, with a right to the minimum salary and increments fixed by law, to a pension, and to certain provision for his widow and children if he die. He cannot be removed from office except for misconduct, and this right he cannot in any way contract away. The assured position of the teacher is a very important point in the Prussian system, because it has much to do with the attractiveness of the teacher's office, and, therefore, with the maintenance of the teaching strength. His office is respected and his position in villages is next to the clergyman's. He frequently makes an advantageous marriage in country places. There are no barriers, a teacher may become a rector or school inspector."

The excellent position of the Prussian teacher.

Surely before deciding on this great question the educational systems of the United States of America, and of our great self-governing colonies, peopled and ruled by persons of British extraction, and professing the various religions prevalent in the United Kingdom, but freed from old and narrow ecclesiastical associations and prejudices, should be carefully studied. In the United States, by the Constitution not a single penny of public money is given for the teaching of any religion in schools or universities, and the Churches have nothing to do with either. In the Colonies, with the exception of some provinces of Canada, State Education is absolutely non-sectarian *(a)*.

No State provision for teaching religion in the United States or in the British Colonies.

The charitably and liberally-minded Dean of St. Paul's characterised the non-sectarian schools as "seminaries of vice." Perhaps he and those who think with him would do well to consider whether the people of all the great civilised Powers of Europe, of the United States, and of the British Colonies who have adopted non-sectarian education are insensible to the claims of morality and religion. It is a remarkable fact that one can find no example at the present time of a clerically-ruled primary education in any important State, either Catholic or Protestant, outside of the United Kingdom. It is to Ireland we must come, and here there is a system thoroughly sectarian from bottom to top, corrupt in its workings, so contemptible in its educational results that it is no credit to the Commissioners of National Education, to the clerical managers of schools, or to the Irish Government. For all this, Dublin Castle, in other words, the English Government is primarily responsible. It has in all its dealings petted and pampered and given power to the Churches in the hope, I suppose, of pacifying Ireland through their agency, and has never acted as if any section of the laity had any responsibility for the education of their children, or could be otherwise regarded than totally incompetent to direct any education.

The Dean of St. Paul's on non-sectarian schools.

Corrupt Irish sectarian education.

Pampering of the Churches.

The First Lord of the Treasury, during his tenure of office as Chief Secretary of Ireland, should have known the backward condition of primary education brought about by the State-fostered clerical management. That is a strong argument for saving England from such a calamity. The Inspectors of the National Schools of Ireland, both Roman Catholics and Protestants, have for many years reported most unfavourably of

Mr. Arthur Balfour and sectarian Irish education.

(*a*) The British Government is now establishing an admirable system of non-sectarian education in the Transvaal and Orange Free State, and are importing highly-qualified teachers with excellent position, salary, and prospects.

Sectarian rule of Irish education must be abolished.

everything practically connected with the National Schools, and their indictments are so serious that, failing some justification, the whole system of management will have to be abolished root and branch, and the control of education entirely entrusted to popular bodies elected by the people.

If the present Bill pass in England what will be the position in Ireland? Here for 70 years misuse or waste of the money of the State has been going on. The people have not felt it, as they had not to pay it directly in rates. Will the Government propose to follow this English legislation and convert all these clerically-ruled State institutions into institutions nominally representative, and ask the ratepayers to put their hands in their pockets and submit patiently to be plucked in the interests of so-called religion?

Excessive State grants for Irish primary education.

The gravity of the financial question is extreme. Would it be believed that the grant by the State to the National Board of Education for Ireland in 1890 was £611,704 more than it should have received were the same rate per child paid as in Scotland? That excessive payment has been going on for a long time. Will the Government grant more money to Ireland to replace the dilapidated, petty, and unsanitary schools by others suitable for National Education, and to remunerate adequately competent teachers?

The excess of grants for sectarian primary education in Ireland would buy out all the voluntary schools of England.

The annual excess paid Ireland would be sufficient to pay the annual expenses of 30 Royal Universities—i.e., one for each county. It would nearly pay the annual interest on a loan to pay off the whole of the money (some £26,000,000) said to be invested in voluntary schools in England if the Government bought them all out. This makes me ask whether the Government promoters of this measure seriously put forward a petty financial difficulty as a ground for mortgaging the millions of children and their prospects to the owners of voluntary schools to save some six or eight hundred thousand pounds per annum (probably much less)? The whole capital sum involved would on the most liberal calculation not exceed the cost of bringing the troops home from South Africa and re-settling the Boers in their farms.

I intend in a further letter to state the substance of the indictment of the whole National School System in Ireland by the Inspectors of the National Schools, and it will be then for the public to say whether an inquiry by an impartial Royal Commission be not an urgent necessity. Meantime I would suggest that members of Parliament anl all persons interested in primary education should obtain the reports of the Inspectors of Irish National Schools for the past ten years and diligently study them.—Your obedient servant,

William A. M'Keown.

20, College Square E., Belfast,
19th June, 1902.

Letter VII.

INDICTMENT OF IRISH NATIONAL EDUCATION COMMISSIONERS AND MANAGERS BY THE INSPECTORS OF SCHOOLS.

CHARACTER OF IRISH NATIONAL SCHOOLS.

CHARACTER OF BELFAST SCHOOLS IN PARTICULAR.

THE ELECTION FOR SOUTH BELFAST.

Indictment of National Commissioners and of clerical management:

A careful study of the system of National Education in Ireland and of that of other countries has convinced me that if Ireland is to take its proper place amongst civilised nations an abolition of the present Board of National Education and of the present system of school management is essential. I have already said that a Royal Commission is urgently needed, but I find that the reports of the Inspectors of National Schools constitute an indictment of the National Board and of the management of schools which it will be difficult to meet.

Who are the Irish National Board?

Who are the National Commissioners, by whom are they appointed, who are the managers of schools, and by whom are they appointed? The Board consists of some twenty members, all appointed by Dublin Castle, a prime consideration in the appointment being professed religion. Taking the lists at different periods for the last seventy years, we find Archbishops and Bishops, Chancellors and Vice-Chancellors, Chief Justices and Chief Barons, Solicitor-Generals and Attorney-Generals, Doctors of Divinity and Doctors of Law, Dukes, Lords, Viscounts, and Knights, Presidents of Colleges, Moderators of the General Assembly, and common Presbyters, so that in the world, perhaps, there never could be found at any time more highly respectable, and it might be supposed more competent individuals to regulate education for the masses. It will be interesting to know the fruit of such a long period of, I may say, absolute rule by persons with the most excellent credentials, approved by the Churches.

Managers have absolute authority.

Under the Commissioners the managers of schools are entrusted with absolute authority in the appointment and dismissal of teachers in ordinary schools. According to the report of 1899, there were 13,074 teachers in ordinary schools and 4,846 monitors—i.e., a total of 17,920 persons paid by the State, but liable to instant dismissal without cause assigned; 7,573 ordinary schools are under clerical management and 902 under lay management. This does not take into account convent, monastery, model, and poor-law schools.

Ireland should stand first if absolute clerical rule good.

If autocratic power almost altogether in the hands of the Churches be good for education, then Ireland should hold the premier place in the world, for one will not find in the whole world anything analogous to the Irish system.

Damaging reports of Inspectors of National Schools.

The reports of the Inspectors of National Schools in Ireland are of the most lamentable character, in fact there is hardly a redeeming feature. I may here premise that, whilst I state the charges made by the Inspectors affecting in a general way Commissioners, managers, and teachers, it must be understood that the charges made are really charges against a system which, from its inherent badness, permits to go unchecked and unpunished the very grossest abuses, and that there are fortunately in Ireland a large number of managers and teachers who perform their duty ably and conscientiously under the most trying and unfavourable circumstances.

Shocking character of Irish schools.

Now, as to the character of the schools. I have not a report giving full details after 1894, but I can see from the general tenor of subsequent reports that the conditions have not been materially altered. That report deals with 8,500 National Schools. As regards out offices, 5,597 were good, 1,476 middling, 374 bad, and 1,053 had none at all. As regards the cleanliness of schoolrooms, 6,179 were good, 1,953 were middling, and 368 bad. As regards the cleanliness of children, 6,437 were good, 1,882 were middling, and 181 bad. As regards repairs, 6,059 were good, 1,789 were middling, and 652 bad. As regards furniture and apparatus, 5,906 were good, 1,979 were middling, and 615 bad. As regards playgrounds, 4,642 were good, 1,665 middling, 467 bad, 1,726 no playgrounds at all. As regards space accommodation, 6,752 were good, 1,208 middling, 540 bad. As regards supply of books and other requisites, 6,536 were good, 1,637 middling, 327 bad. Tables of this sort give no adequate idea of the real condition of things. I have reason to know the Irish standard in everything pertaining to the schools is lamentably low, but what would it be if the German, Swiss, Dutch, Belgian, French, or American standards were adopted for comparison?

British Association and the Belfast Schools.

As things go in Ireland, Belfast City stands relatively well in education. There is a fine chance of showing what a highly civilised people we are. The civilisation of a people is not to be estimated by cathedrals, churches, theatres, or public works, but by the schools. The British Association meets in September. There will be many distinguished people here from many countries, and would it not be well for the Commissioners of National Education and the managers of schools to invite these gentlemen to visit the schools, and show what a high standard we have reached in the Isle of Saints?

Extracts from Inspectors reports condemning schools.

But to get at the real state of things in the schools, we must take, not the tables referred to, but the actual reports of the Inspectors relating to districts. I cull a few passages—"Inadequate space afforded in the newly-erected vested schoolhouses," "Walls of the schoolroom want more frequent lime-washing," "The furniture needs dusting," "Maps hang crooked," "I find an unclean floor, with dirty, torn papers lying about," "The book press and master's desk in disorder," "Dust everywhere," "No fire in the grate," "Out offices, instead of being an advantage, a dangerous source of disease and death," "There are other unsuitable schools even more objectionable," "These are the schools that are built in graveyards," "Some of these have been built actually over old graves," "The desks are very frequently shaky, hacked, worn, and much too narrow," "Cheerless, half-furnished, and ill-equipped rooms," "The appearance of the children is also often

sadly neglected, dirty and torn pinafores, soiled hands and faces," "Taken as a whole, the rural schools and a large percentage of the town schools show very slight signs of neatness, taste, or the most elementary refinement in this respect," "The offices are in many cases very much neglected. The air in such buildings seems to be permanently tainted, and the very walls appear to reek with effluvium. Years may elapse without these houses receiving a single coat of whitewash."

The following deal specially with Belfast:—

Special reports about Belfast schools.

Dr. Moran, in a report on the Belfast Circuit, dated 9th January, 1899, says:—"The ordinary National Schools vary in degree from excellent to very bad, and judging from my own experience alone, I am in a position to repeat that the number of bad schools is not sensibly diminishing."

Poor education.

Mr. Dalton, on 31st January, 1898, says:—"It is lamentable to see so often children taken from school at an immature age by persons who could well afford to leave them there, and it is still more lamentable to find how little of what they have learned survives the absence of a few months. Our position here at present is this, we bring the most of the children to the fourth or the fifth standard, but there we let them go adrift."

Overcrowding. No places for 40 per cent.

Dr. Beatty, in a report of February, 1895, says:—"The question of insufficient space is one which is assuming alarming proportions in Ballymacarrett. With hardly an exception the schools are overcrowded. For nearly 40 per cent. of the children on the rolls there are no school places available."

Churches cannot find school accommodation.

Again, in April, 1897, he writes:—"The provision of school accommodation for the rapidly-increasing population of Ballymacarrett presents a problem very difficult of solution. The erection of schools by the clergymen of the various parishes and congregations has almost ceased in Ballymacarrett. An influential manager has complained to me that the burden of housing the ever-growing multitude of children has been found by his congregation to be intolerable. Whether in Belfast the present chaotic condition of things may ultimately necessitate the establishment of a rate-collecting body for the provision of schools it is impossible to say, but any other means of escape from the difficulty will not be easily found. Again, in a report of January, 1900, he says:—

Suggestion of rates.

Belfast unsanitary houses.

"No doubt no other city in the world of the wealth and enterprise of Belfast would tolerate such primitive and unsanitary houses as are many of the Belfast schools." He altogether tabulates a terrible indictment against some of the schools, "habitually overcrowded," "dangerously overcrowded," houses not of a suitable construction, "small rooms connected with tortuous stairs," "continuous din," "lowness of ceilings," "almost indecent and with little doubt unsanitary position of the out-offices." "Here it may be allowable to express surprise that the Town Council of a large and prosperous City like Belfast, which has done a good deal towards providing parks and breathing spaces for the grown inhabitants, should have done so little to maintain the health of the coming generation." "As there is no playground, it is necessary to detain the children in the schoolroom, frequently ill-ventilated and overcrowded, for a school day of four or five continuous hours. This arrangement can hardly be anything but injurious to the health of

Injury to health.

both teachers and pupils, and moreover, as far as any estimate can yet be found, is not in consonance with the wishes of the parents."

As to managers, health of teachers and pupils, discipline of the schools, and manners taught in the schools, Dr. Beatty is delightfully explicit:—"Many of the managers do not appear in all cases to have any bias towards or natural interest in the matter. This is most regrettable, because in Belfast, as in other large cities, there must be a considerable number of leisured gentlemen and ladies who would be willing and eager to devote their energies to the promotion of education, thus bringing in the healthy breath of publicity and popular interest, the absence of which is one of the most depressing characteristics in our school history. At present it is to be feared that some managers are guided by considerations of a parochial or congregational character rather than by a desire to obtain for the Board the best possible value for the very large sums which they have the privilege of locally administering. In one case a Church Committee has actually proceeded to levy subscriptions at the point of a threat of dismissal, and, incredible as it may appear, the notice of dismissal was, on refusal, actually delivered to one of the teachers."

Managers take no interest.

Managers guided by parochial interests.

Gross extortion by a Church committee.

As to discipline and good manners he says:—"It will be also understood readily that discipline and training are greatly hampered by the character of the schoolhouses. The children are kept quiet, undoubtedly, and in this respect all credit is due to the controlling power of the teachers. . . . It is difficult, we may say impossible, to inculcate order and cleanliness in a schoolhouse unprovided with racks for caps, and without clean floors. It is difficult to inculcate that indefinable charming thing called manners. If 'manners maketh man,' what indeed are the children of Ballymacarrett? To me, personally, they are, indeed, delightful; their absolute inattention to all the formalities of life has often struck a spark of humour out of the dreariest dry of "results drudgery."

Want of discipline and manners.

Time and space will not admit of more than summarising a number of queries suggested by the reports of the Inspectors.

Have the Inspectors reported that third-rate teachers have been appointed to important schools when first-class teachers were available, and what have the Commissioners done to prevent such gross managerial abuse of power? Is it that managers of a certain class cannot bear or tolerate clever teachers, and why? Have they ever thought what "other considerations" than efficiency weigh in these appointments? Do "other considerations" include the sale of schools by managers to the highest bidder, a practice reported to be common in some parts of Ireland? To what extent have teachers been obliged to repair schoolhouses? To what extent have teachers been obliged to perform other duties in addition to their teaching duties as a condition of employment? Are the Commissioners aware that in most other countries the teachers are not permitted to perform extraneous duties, and if so permitted it is only by special authority? Have the Commissioners ever grasped the cardinal idea that if they are to have good and able teachers the tenure of the teacher must be secure and his position made respectable? Have the Commissioners not in face of the warnings of the Inspectors permitted the establishment of petty, unnecessary schools, with almost necessarily inefficient teachers, although they had absolute power to prevent this? Have they exercised

Specific charges against the Commissioners in form of queries suggested by Inspectors reports.

their power to oblige trustees of schools altogether, or almost altogether, built by the money of the State to keep the schools in proper repair? What have they done to deter managers from preventing children going to school on the most flimsy pretext? Have not the Commissioners been informed times without number of the apathy of the people from having no direct interest in the schools, and have they ever, as capable men would have done, urged popular control of schools? With the appalling reports of filth and uncleanliness, for which managers are responsible, how often have they dismissed managers, and how often have they withheld grants to enforce decent conditions for children? Was there a single person amongst the Commissioners with knowledge that it was perfectly absurd to ask middle-aged men and women to teach hand and eye training after a few lessons, when it takes a couple of years to train a young adaptable person for that sort of work? What can the Commissioners say for new regulations which lower salaries already low, make promotion for the best almost impossible, and the service of education of such a character as to warn off all able men and women, and leave the field to persons who would have a more fitting scope for their talents in some other vocation in life?

How can the Commissioners explain in these days of progress that primary education in Ireland is much inferior to what it was forty years ago, and is now of such a character as not to fit the great majority of the young people for anything further than to be hewers of wood and drawers of water? What chance has the very best educated of the National School children of Ireland to compete for appointments against the highly-trained youth of Scotland, America, Germany, and other European countries?

Opportunity afforded by coming South Belfast Election.

By the lamented death or Mr. William Johnston the electors of South Belfast have a grand opportunity of leading the van of educational reform for the masses. It is for the working people, who are chiefly concerned, to say now whether they are satisfied with the present condition of affairs, or whether they will return a member pledged to do his best to abolish the present Board of Education and the present system, one who knows about education and who will not condescend, like Mr. Moore, K.C., to say that he knows nothing about the present Education Bill, and that he follows, like a sheep, others who know as little as himself. Every other question about Belfast is insignificant compared with the education, or rather the want of education, of about 60,000 National School children of the city. To me it appears that the City Council will be forced immediately to demand the control of primary education. The Government already pays at the rate of £2 5s 3d per annum for every child in Ireland with an average attendance. Assuming that 60,000 children in Belfast attend, or should attend, school, Belfast would be entitled from the State to the handsome sum of £138,750 per annum. The city should demand this sum and administer it through the City Council. Popular control of education should be the watchword.—Your obedient servant,

The duty of Belfast to demand the distribution of the present State grant of £2 5s 3d per child.

William A. M'Keown.

20, College Square E., Belfast,
21st July, 1902.

Letter VIII.

POPULAR VERSUS CLERICAL CONTROL.

CHARACTER OF ENGLISH EDUCATION BILL.

HOW MAY THE BILL AFFECT IRELAND?

WHO WILL PROVIDE SCHOOLS FOR BELFAST?

IS THE PROVISION OF SCHOOLS A CHARITY OR A PUBLIC DUTY?

BEGGING BUSINESS BY CLERGYMEN FOR SCHOOLS.

Now that the Boer War is over, and the Union, except for oratorical purposes, quite secure, all other questions seem to be insignificant compared with the education of the people, and the Irish people, being the most uneducated in the kingdom, are the most deeply concerned.

I submit that I have proven from official statements that a very large number of the National Schools of Ireland are not fit places for the education of children; that the education imparted is not such as to secure opportunities of advancement; that the immense majority of the children of Ireland have only the prospect of being hewers of wood and drawers of water; and surely if that be the result of a system of so-called National Education, in which a State-fostered clericalism has been in the saddle for seventy years, it is time to think of abolishing a system which has brought about such dire results, and substituting something better. In addition to having an uneducated people, we have a disunited people, suspicious, prejudiced, thinking without cause evil of each other, and meeting the fate of the house divided against itself. Is it not time to end clericalism, and let the people themselves, Roman Catholic and Protestant, rule and direct ther own education? In a word, popular should supplant clerical control. It has been found to be successful in other countries, and why should it not be in Ireland? I may be here allowed at once to state my convictions, from long observation and from knowledge of the views of people of different classes, and professing different religions, that under popular control, whether that control be predominantly lay Catholic or lay Protestant, and with high-class teachers appointed in the schools by lay governors, there need be no fear whatever of the faith and morals of any child being tampered with or unsettled. I make no apology for persistently hammering at this education question. It is the question of the day, and will be the question for years because of the present English Education Bill. That Bill, if it pass, reverses the honest progressive policy of School Boards, legally establishes

Popular control of education.

clericalism in England in power, and imposes it perpetually on the people so far as an Act of Parliament can do it. Besides, if it pass, England will be cursed with the most illogical, imperfect, unpopular, and strife-breeding system of any civilised country. Will the English people support out of the rates the schools of the English Ritualists, the Jesuits, and other religious Orders without any real control? It is un-English and unconstitutional, and the weak-kneed members of Parliament who were elected to fight out this war, and had not the courage to tell Mr. Balfour they could not support him in this clerical conspiracy against popular rights and popular power in education, will find at the next election a large secession of former supporters. They need not try to cover their treachery to their staunch supporters by shouting about the Union and the Boers. There will be a bitter anti-clerical war in England and Ireland. The battle will have to be fought to a finish, and will involve a great deal more than schools.

Treachery of the present Government

How does this Bill affect Ireland? Primary education in Ireland cannot remain as it is. If Mr. Balfour and his subservient followers are not brought to book, the same Bill in a modified form will be extended to Ireland. I will endeavour to show what may be in store for Belfast, the part of Ireland with which I am most familiar. I find that there were in Belfast in the year 1901 some 296 National Schools. Regarding three of these I have imperfect information, and I consequently omit them in my calculations. On the rolls of the 293 schools as to which I have information there were 58,639 pupils, with an average attendance of only 40,767—that is only 69.5 per cent. That reveals a shocking state of things, for if children only attend two or three days in the week, and absent themselves on other days, their education must be of the most imperfect character.

How English Bill may affect Ireland.

I have information about the school accommodation in relation to 61 of these schools. On the rolls of these 61 schools there are 13,778 pupils, with school accommodation for only 10,031; that is to say, if these schools were packed to their utmost capacity there would be no places whatever for 3,747 pupils, allowing 8 square feet floor-space for each child. But 8 square feet is totally inadequate. If each child were allowed one-half of the cubic space considered necessary by physiologists, there would be only accommodation in these 61 schools for about 4,000 pupils. What about the number on the rolls of other schools in Belfast, and their space accommodation? I think the Corporation should issue an official statement showing the school accommodation for all the National School children of Belfast, that the public may know the real state of the case.

Deficient school accommodation in Belfast.

Now the question comes up, and it must be met. If the children are to grow into strong, healthy, educated men and women, adequate school accommodation, not the 8 square feet of the National Board, should be provided for every child. Whose duty is it to provide that accommodation? Are the Churches to do it? Are the present managers of the schools of Belfast to do it? Is it to be done by persistent begging, bazaars, lotteries, &c., &c.? Is it, in point of fact, to be a matter of charity, or is it to be a public duty? And if a public duty, is it to be a Municipal or a Government duty? Now who are the managers of the National Schools of Belfast? I find 224 schools are under clerical management, and 69 under lay management. Now I have no

Who will provide school accommodation?

Majority of Belfast schools not suitable.

doubt in case of inspection of all these schools by competent school architects and educationalists, the great majority would be condemned as not satisfying modern requirements. Will the managers of schools, lay and clerical, undertake the Herculean task of providing necessary funds and providing new healthy schools with sufficient playgrounds, and retain the management? I think this may be dismissed as impracticable, and, if practicable, wholly against the interests of education.

Compulsory attendance objectionable with present schools.

The Corporation has been summoning poor people for not sending their children to school, without seeing that there is healthy accommodation for them. I would suggest that the parents of children should demand from the Corporation such accommodation. I should say there is no law to compel the attendance of children in overcrowded, unsanitary schools.

Begging business for schools by clergymen.

Some clergymen carried on a large begging business for schools, of which they ultimately were appointed managers. I think they are entitled to the thanks of the community for the great trouble they took in the interests of education; but, apart from all other considerations, that method of raising money for education does not suit these times, nor is capable of meeting the educational wants of a large, constantly increasing community. Some clergymen established quite a large number of schools, one no less than eight. His successor has now the management. In these schools there are 1,751 pupils on the rolls, and 1,294 in average attendance. He is the absolute master of all the teachers, perhaps 30 to 40. I would like to know whether any clerical or lay person should be the absolute master of all these servants of the State and dictator of the education of all these children? I think it is clear any self-respecting community is called on to end such a state of things. Fortunately affairs are so bad there can be no patching. It is surely clear that the Corporation must take in hand the education of the children, raise the money, and appoint the teachers. Better to spend money on education, and diminish the cost entailed by members of "Bogey" clubs, hooligans, corner-boys, rioters, criminals, lunatics, and paupers, of whom we have too many in Ireland.

Multiple clerical managerships.

South Belfast Election.

Trades Council demands popular control.

If the unholy alliance of Mr. Arthur Balfour, Lord Hugh Cecil, the Jesuits, and the Irish Nationalists propose legislation for Ireland similar to that proposed for England and Wales, what will the Belfast people say? Will they pay rates and be obliged to support schools ruled by the irresponsible managers of Belfast, or will they demand absolute control themselves? The Belfast people should show their detestation of the educational policy of the present Government, and they will have an excellent opportunity for doing so at the coming election for South Belfast. I am glad to observe that the Trades Council of Belfast are alive to this danger, and that they have given a clear indication that they will have popular and not clerical control of schools. I trust that the representative of South Belfast, whoever he may be, will be pledged absolutely to vote against this English Bill, and do what he can to thwart Mr. Balfour in his clerical educational policy. Let the electors not forget that the education of the millions of helpless school children of the United Kingdom is of infinitely more

Primary education more important than University.

importance than the education of a few thousand university students, who can besides take very good care of themselves, and, further, that the experience of all nations has shown that no clerically-ruled secular education has ever been good for the people.—Your obedient servant,

WILLIAM A. M'KEOWN.

20, College Square E., Belfast,
Belfast, 9th August, 1902.

P.S.—I find there are altogether 158 managers of the 295 schools, and they may be classified as follows:—

Clerical—

Classification of Belfast school managers.

Protestant Episcopal	29
Presbyterian	29
Roman Catholic, including five convent schools	28
Methodist	14
Independent	2
Baptist	1
Moravian	1
Jewish	1
Lay	53
	158

The representative returned since this was written, Mr. Sloan, is pledged absolutely to vote against the English Education Bill. His opponent, Mr. Dunbar-Buller, stated if he were returned he would support the Bill.

Letter IX.

MR. ARTHUR BALFOUR AND CLERICALISM IN EDUCATION.

CLERICALISM IN IRISH NATIONAL SCHOOLS, SECONDARY SCHOOLS, AND INDUSTRIAL SCHOOLS.

MR. HORACE PLUNKETT'S INTRODUCTION OF CLERICALISM IN THE IRISH AGRICULTURAL AND TECHNICAL DEPARTMENT.

LEGALISED CLERICAL CONSPIRACY IN ENGLAND UNDER THE VOLUNTARY SCHOOLS' ACT.

CLERICALISM RULES THE IRISH GOVERNMENT.

The fate of the present Government is bound up with the Education Bill. In Belfast the issue may be clouded by local jealousies and forces, but the Education Bill will settle the pending elections in England and Scotland. The issue is whether the ratepayers will pay rates to support schools which they do not control. Whoever originated this measure, Mr. Balfour, as its proposer and pilot, must receive all the praise or blame associated with it. Indeed, I think evidence shows that he himself is the chief of a clerical conspiracy in the United Kingdom to put education in the hands of the clerics of different denominations, and at the same time saddle the State and the ratepayers with the cost. His Education Bill is merely an evolution of a pro-clerical and anti-popular policy which began during his Chief Secretaryship in Ireland. He became accustomed to the pernicious idea prevalent in this country of ruling the people by bribing the clerics with place, power, and patronage, and he has been doubtless so pleased with its results in Ireland that he proposes to extend its supposed blessing to England and Wales. I now subjoin a short account of his views and doings, with my comments based on reliable information. His first notable performance was in Scotland at Partick, when he took advantage of an unwarrantable action of the Committee of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland as an argument for sectarianising education.

Mr. Balfour in Partick advocating sectarianism bribes.

2nd December, 1889—He says: "It is an interesting fact—a fact which I see no reason for concealing—that when a vacancy occurred in the presidency of Queen's College, Belfast, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland

The action of the Committee of the Presbyterian Church has been repudiated, and neither the Church itself nor any representative of it, cleric or lay, dare to come out in the open and advocate the appointment of a Presbyterian clergyman

or a Committee of that Assembly wrote to me officially, and stated that, as the large majority of the students of Belfast College were Presbyterians, and as a large number of the Presbyterian clergy in Ireland were educated there, they hoped that I would put a Presbyterian minister at its head. I thought, and I still think, that request a perfectly legitimate one, and accordingly the Irish Government recommended to her Majesty the appointment of a Presbyterian minister last year to be head of Queen's College, Belfast. Now, I state that as showing that, if higher education in Ireland be described in any sense as undenominational at this moment, it is not the kind of undenominationalism which ignores the existence of various denominations."

to the presidency of the Queen's College, Belfast. Mr. Balfour proposed to bribe the Presbyterian Church, but the proposition has been spurned by the people of Ulster and by the graduates of the Royal University, who are hostile to all clericalism.

In accordance with the views expressed in that speech the Rev. Dr. Hamilton has been appointed President of the College. I have reason for asking whether any understanding existed, even at that time, that the Queen's College was afterwards to be converted into a Presbyterian College or University in carrying out Mr. Balfour's plan of completely sectarianising Univerisity Education in Ireland.

26th January, 1899—The next great open step was the proposition by Mr. Balfour, in a letter to Mr. Orrell, to provide a University in Belfast for "the great Presbyterian bodies in the North," and a University in Dublin for the Roman Catholics.

Mr. Balfour's letter to Mr. Orrell.

24th June, 1899—Mr. Balfour urged in the House of Commons, in support of his argument for the sectarianising of Universities in Ireland, that primary education was really sectarian. He spoke of the strong Protestant objection to anything which in the opinion of the objectors seemed to promote the cause of a form of Christianity with which they did not agree, and added that "a great deal of the prejudice was really due to ignorance, and

I agree there has been a great deal of ignorance, and Mr. Balfour himself has been guilty of the most unpardonable ignorance. He should have known that through the management of Dublin Castle everything has been done to put the clergy of the various Churches in control of primary education, and that the welfare of the people has never been consulted. We have a lavish waste of public funds, schoolhouses not fit for children, teachers

Mr. B on Protestant ignorance in Ireland.

Mr. B.'s ignorance of Irish affairs.

ignorance of what we were really doing in Ireland. The House voted, wthout the smallest objection from any section of opinion, large sums of money for a system of primary education which was practically denominational under a conscience clause."

not properly trained, children uneducated, a Board of Education proven to be perfectly incompetent for its duties. This is a remarkable argument for giving Churches more power.

Mr. B. on sectarian secondary education in Ireland.

As to secondary education, he says in the same speech—"For secondary education the House annually voted large sums for purely denominational schools."

The Board of Intermediate Education is another parsonically-ruled Board that so regulated studies as to fit the pupils for clerical seminaries, and not for mercantile, engineering, scientific, or any general, useful calling. Finally, to cap the

The result.

absurdity, Dublin Castle appointed a Commission, consisting of members of this incompetent Board, to take evidence about their own want of competence, and make a report suggesting remedies. Could anyone find out of Bedlam such a proceeding?

Sectarian Industrial Schools—the fruit.

As to industrial and reformatory schools, he says—"For industrial and reformatory schools in Ireland a sum of £103,000 was voted, of which £90,000 was voted in a form of education as denominational as the world had ever seen, and upon the Roman Catholic denominational education we spent very

Charge against Dublin Castle.

much more than twice as much as would be required to establish a Roman Catholic University in Ireland. And that was done without protest and without comment."

No wonder all this was done without protest and without comment, for members of Parliament and the public did not know. If there is an infamous chapter in Irish educational history, it is that of the reformatory and industrial schools. The law cases in the Dublin courts prove the infamies, but Dublin Castle has never prosecuted the wretches who, in the name of religion, have immured children in these schools by perjury, and fleeced the ratepayers in the interests of so-called religion. I have the facts, and I challenge investigation.

I need not follow Mr. Balfour further in his speech, for not one sentence will bear honest criticism.

Indictment of the Technical Board.

We have heard a great deal about the new Agricultural and Technical Board, and the abilities of the Right Honourable Horace Plunkett. I have been watching this Board for a considerable time, and I have to say this, that it is out of the

question to expect any great good out of it in directing scientific and technical education. I do not recognise one person on that Board as a scientific man. I read a great deal about agriculture, creameries, butter, eggs, fish, and poultry, but I may say any competent compiler, with a knowledge of Holland, Belgium, Denmark, Wales, and Scotland could have done all this work years ago without any Board. But, leaving aside these branches, of which all must recognise the importance, what is the prospect of scientific education to train men for our great manufacturing, engineering, and other industries? The College of Science in Dublin, organised by the ablest scientific men of the day many years ago, has been put under this Agricultural Board, that knows nothing of science, and the College is being ruined. Its syllabus for intermediate science education is so behind the times that any competent scientific man would be ashamed of it. But I have to ask another question about this Board: Is it, or is it not, a fact *(a)* that Mr. H. Plunkett in addition to his other impertinences to the deputation from the Belfast Technical School suggested that Most Rev. Dr. Henry, the Roman Catholic Bishop, should be a member of the Technical Board. This is clericalism with a vengeance. I think the Bishop with other Bishops had better attend to the cure of souls, of which there is a great need in Belfast at present, and leave scientific affairs to people who understand them.

College of Science syllabus

Intrusion of clericalism by Mr. Horace Plunkett.

The present Education Bill is only a climax to a long series of Acts, traitorous to the people, by Mr. Arthur Balfour. He has been cunningly organising the clerical forces in England and Scotland. I recommend anyone who wishes to understand the depth of this clerical conspiracy organised by Mr. Arthur Balfour, to look at the Voluntary School Act of 1897. Its title is "An Act to provide for a grant out of the Exchequer in aid of voluntary elementary schools, and for the exemption from rates of these schools, and to repeal part of section nineteen of the Elementary Education Act, 1876." That seems simple enough, but that Act contains the remarkable provision that there should be associations of voluntary schools, that the payments should be made through the associations, and that any school not joining one of the associations might be penalised by the Education Department by exclusion from the grant *(b)*. That, in other words, meant boycotting of those who did not join the organisations. That is worthy of the Land League or any other of the proclaimed Irish Leagues. Under an apparently innocent Act there is a huge clerical conspiracy under the name of associations against popular rights and the public purse. There are the following Associations:—46 Associations, comprising 11,849 Church of England Schools; 11 Associations, comprising 1,046 Roman Catholic Schools; 11 Associations, comprising 805 British and other schools (ultra-Protestant Episcopal); 6 Associations, comprising 475 Wesleyan Schools; 1 Association, comprising 13 Jewish Schools; whilst there are altogether 181 unassociated schools. Mr. Balfour learned the lesson of combination in Ireland. I think it is evident there will be a relentless

Clerical conspiracy by Mr. A. Balfour.

Voluntary schools associations in England.

Boycotting of schools not joining association.

Particulars of associations.

(*a*) It is a fact.

(*b*) I found in the report of the Board of Education, regarding voluntary schools for year 1900-1, that 16 schools had been "excluded from aid grant as having unreasonably failed to join an association." I wrote to the Board of Education for particulars of the 16 schools boycotted by them, and I received a note refusing to give information. This is coercion in clerical interests with a vengeance.

war between Mr. Balfour's organised and bribed clerical forces and the advocates of popular control.

It is impossible to separate Irish and English educational interests. I now come back to the case of Ireland specially, and clericalism in Ireland.

Rule of Ireland through clericalism, not really by the English Government.

The root of educational and all other troubles in Ireland is the fact that the Government of Ireland, though ostensibly by England through Dublin Castle, is really now, and has been long conducted by another and a secret power not known to the public generally, and which works through clericalism. We have all heard that Home Rule means Rome Rule, but is it not a fact that we have Rome rule, not according to the clap-trap meaning of the term, but in a very real sense? The Lord Lieutenant, the Chief Secretary, and the Nationalist members of Parliament are mere marionettes of that secret power. This secret power directs agitation, founds leagues, organises espionage in all quarters, keeps public men (and public women too) under surveillance, and is always ready to be bought off, and apparently conciliated for the time by rewards dictated by itself. It openly abuses Dublin Castle, but secretly supports it. It could not live but by maintenance of incompetence and corruption. It is largely kept in power by Protestants who get some small sops themselves, and who are well designated by O'Donnell as "accommodating." I hope to see the Viceroyalty, Dublin Castle, and the Chief Secretaryship abolished, and Ireland ruled like Scotland. Then clericalism would soon end, and an era of real education, peace, and prosperity be inaugurated under lay direction and control.—Your obedient servant,

Secret rule of Ireland.

"The accommodating Protestants."

William A. M'Keown.

20, College Square E., Belfast,
15th August, 1902.

Letter X.

ENORMOUS NUMBER OF NON-VESTED OR VOLUNTARY SCHOOLS IN IRELAND.

ENORMOUS LOSS OF GOVERNMENT GRANTS BY ESTABLISHMENT OF SUCH SCHOOLS.

INITIAL LOSS OF UPWARDS OF £100,000 STATE GRANTS ON PRESENT BELFAST NON-VESTED SCHOOLS.

SACRIFICE OF HEALTH AND EDUCATION OF CHILDREN FOR ECCLESIASTICAL OBJECTS.

We must all thank Mr. Balfour for his attempt to clericalise University Education in Ireland and Bishop O'Dwyer for his remarkable evidence about clerical managers. If they had known that the whole question of primary education in Ireland would be in consequence investigated and sifted to the bottom, I think we would never have heard of a Roman Caholic Universty.

I have now to deal with a new aspect of primary education which has just occurred to me to-day. Why have so many schools, built entirely by private funds, known as non-vested schools or private, been established in Ireland when by compliance with the rules of the National Board they might have been vested in local trustees or in the Commissioners, and have received for building and equipment from the State double the amount raised locally? Is it that the clerical managers preferred petty schools under their own absolute control and the teachers under a most perfect condition of subjection to themselves than good schools under trustees or under the National Commissioners?

The total number of National Schools on the rolls in 1899 was 9,161.

Vested and non-vested schools.

1,065 were vested in the Commissioners	} 43 per cent.
2,850 were vested in Trustees	
5,246 non-vested—i.e., privately owned	57 per cent.

Why were these 5,246 schools not vested in the Commissioners? The Commissioners would at first have contributed two-thirds of the cost, and have ever afterwards kept the premises in repair.

Why so many non-vested or private schools.

Why were they not vested in trustees, so as at elast to give an appearance of representation to the local contributors? If vested in trustees the State would have contributed two-thirds of the initial cost, but the trustees would have been obliged to keep the premises in repair. Why, then, do we find that with all these advantages offered by the State there were so many as 5,246 of all sorts and

Clerical interests of prime importance, educational secondary.

conditions erected from private sources? It could not be in the interest of education, for as a rule the schools are of the most discreditable character. One can only conclude that education was a consideration of secondary importance, and whatever may have been the ostensible object, one cannot help thinking it was for some selfish private end, with few exceptions clerical, and not in the general interest of the education of the children.

But what is the state of Belfast in relation to vested and non-vested schools? I have particulars on this matter about 276. Of these 248 are non-vested, 15 vested in trustees, and 13 in the Commssioners—that is,

Non-vested	...	...	...	... 90 per cent.
Vested	...	...	...	... 10 per cent.

Belfast and non-sectarian education—a suggestion.

It is surely astonishing that Belfast, claiming to be the great centre of the truest unsectarianism, pre-eminently stands out as a place in all Ireland that will not take free gifts of Government money, for unsectarian education, which may be had on the easiest terms. It is surely time for the Belfast people to keep a sharp eye on those who pose as its unsectarian guides, and in fact to depose them.

Why did promoters of schools not seek Government aid and have good schools?

I would like to know, and I hope the public will insist on knowing, why those who voluntarily undertook the task of building schools in Belfast did not secure these large Government grants by vesting the schools in the Commissioners or trustees. What good schools we might have had if the citizens had directed education themselves on a broad basis and secured this Government aid!

I have made a calculation about the loss to Belfast which may be regarded as substantially accurate. There are about 60,000 school children on the rolls of the National Schools of Belfast, and of these more than 50,000 attend non-vested schools. The initial loss of State grants to Belfast in building the present non-vested schools has been at least, according to the Board's table of allowances, £105,000. What about the loss on schools for the last seventy years? If all these schools and past schools had been vested in the Commissioners the Belfast people would not have had even to spend a penny in repairs for the last seventy years. That is a mere bagatelle, compared to about £140,000 per annum paid by the State through clerical agencies for primary education in Belfast, and largely misapplied.

Great loss to Belfast through private schools.

What right had those who grasped the control of education to deprive the city of this Government aid, and immure children in dens dangerous to health, and often to life, and totally unsuited for education, and bring disgrace on a city famous in the last century for its education, and now one of the most rising in the world for industry and commerce? Will Mr. Balfour bolster up these 90 per cent. generally wretched schools of Belfast somehow, as he is endeavouring to do the voluntary schools of England, on the ridiculous pretence of promoting dogmatic religion—that is, making these mites of the elementary schools young theologians?

Don't let anyone think that Ireland is not concerned in this English Education Bill. Mr. Balfour advanced as an argument for clericalising university education in Ireland that primary education was really sectarian. The fact was stated by him quite correctly, but the result is deplorable. The education of the children of Ireland has been sacrificed for ecclesiastical objects. If we think of the hosts of children who have been ruined in health by these places called schools and the

Sacrifice of health and education for clerical interests.

millions of Irish children whose prospects have been ruined by an imperfect education, clericalism in secular education should be destroyed with the greatest expedition.

I have learned that the managers of three of the schools in Dock Ward on my black list are promoting a scheme for establishing one good school instead of the three bad ones. I would humbly give a word of warning. The practice hitherto has been to beg in every quarter, and then for the collector, when he has enough to build some kind of school, coolly to secure his own appointment as manager by the National Board and ignore the donors altogether. It would be well for those who subscribe to this laudable object to insist on the following conditions:—

Warning to subscribers to proposed new school.

1. That the subscribers shall appoint their own Committee and the Committee its manager.

Conditions which should be imposed.

2. That the Committee should appoint the teachers, and that the teachers should not be dismissed except by the Committee.

3. That there should always be some ladies on the Committee.

4. That the teachers should only give simple undenominational teaching.

5. That the clergy of the different denominations should give denominational teaching at settled times in one of the classrooms.

Should the public give any countenance to any further clerically managed schools, considering the present education crisis, they will commit a dreadful blunder.—Yours, &c.,

William A. M'Keown.

20, College Square E., Belfast,
17th October, 1902.

Irish National Education.

MEETING OF THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION IN BELFAST IN SEPTEMBER, 1902.

REMARKABLE ADDRESS BY DR. STARKIE, RESIDENT COMMISSIONER OF NATIONAL EDUCATION.

HIS CONFESSIONS.

CONDEMNATION OF SCHOOL MANAGERS.

CONDEMNATION OF SCHOOLS.

CONDEMNATION OF MONOPOLY OF LAY TEACHING BY CLERICS AND RELIGIOUS ORDERS.

DR. STARKIE'S PESSIMISM.

REMARKS ON THE MANAGEMENT OF THE EDUCATIONAL SECTION OF THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION.

The Royal Commission on University Education in Ireland has been fateful for Primary Education in Ireland. There had been for a long period of years peace—profound peace. The sects had possession of the primary schools, wielded autocratic power over the teachers, often mercilessly, and dispensed State patronage just as they pleased, without any efficient control or supervision. The representatives of the sects on the National Board were on the terms of the greatest amity. It is true there was occasionally an appearance of war between members of the Board, but there was always an unreality about it. Witness the flatulent correspondence between the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin and Dr. Starkie about some petty office irregularity, and the awful disaster to education by the resignation of the Archbishop, loudly proclaimed in columns of leading articles of the Dublin Press. Even clerical squabbles on this Star-chamber Board reached the Press, and were magnified into affairs of great importance. Meantime, whilst this stage thunder was going on, the doughty antagonists were acting most harmoniously in concocting their precious new programme—a fatal blow to the efficiency and utility of Irish Primary Education—in drawing a scheme which would diminish the income and degrade still more the already degraded position of the teacher, and make all hope of advancement for teachers depend on favour and not on merit. But notwithstanding this serene sky and smooth waters a bolt burst from the blue, and the sacred barque of the National Commissioners is amongst the breakers. Bishop O'Dwyer raised the storm, which is now a hurricane.

Introductory observations to Dr. Starkie's address.

The great event of the meeting of the British Association was the remarkable address of Dr. Starkie, Resident Commissioner of National Education. He has reiterated, emphasised, and given official confirmation to the grave charges which I have in my letters repeatedly made against the National Board of Education, the managerial system, and the general administration. The National Education of the 900,000 Irish children has now assumed the position of a great Irish question of the first rank.

DR. STARKIE'S ADDRESS.

The following is an extract from Dr. Starkie's address:—

Dr. Starkie's Address.

"Speaking of compulsory attendance he says—"Our inspectors report that there is no hope for better things in Ireland until the schools are made more comfortable and are properly heated, and unless—there is great virtue in an unless—the people take an interest in Education. It is an important question for this section to discuss what is the most efficacious method to induce managers, who can find money for everything except education, to keep their schools, largely built at the expense of the State, in such a habitable condition that it is not a cruelty to send children there, or how to revive a love for the things of the mind in a people who, outside of politics and religion, have not yet been roused from the intellectual atrophy in which they have been sunk for centuries."

Managerial neglect of Schools.

After speaking about co-ordination, he proceeds:—

"I have explained how far we have attempted to co-ordinate primary, secondary, and technical instruction, and how necessary it is to the organic unity of the whole that a single central authority should be created. But there is one thing remaining without which my scheme is the baseless fabric of a vision. If we follow Butler and compare its constitution to the "idea of a watch," we shall find that, now that the work is completed, we have omitted a part which may easily escape the eye, but which is usually considered indispensable. I mean the mainspring. And the mainspring of any educational system is what the "Times" calls the "driving force of public opinion." In Germany, where the Government is supposed to be a rigid bureaucracy, every care is taken to decentralise authority and to vest the administration of the schools as far as possible in local bodies. In France the communes are responsible for the upkeep of the schools, and all grades of education are under the direct control of the Rector of the University of the province. As Mr. Arnold said, 'In France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, the primary system has, and exists by having, the commune, and the municipal government of the commune, as its foundation.' In Wales the joint education committees of the counties and county boroughs have created a system of secondary education which 'this country (England) must still regard with envious eyes;' and the Engilsh Education Bill of 1902 proposes to vest the control of all education below the universities in the county councils.* Whether a similar devolution of authority comes within the ambit of practical politics in Ireland is a problem

Driving force of public opinion necessary.

Local control in Germany, France, Switzerland, Italy.

School management in Ireland without parallel

* This statement is quite incorrect—Under the Bill the teachers in the voluntary schools are to be appointed by the parsons and their friends. The public pay the teachers through taxes and rates, but have nothing to do with their appointment. In Ireland the managers appoint, but the State pays.

Dr. Starkie's Address.

that lies on the knees of the gods, but my experience of school committees in Ireland does not incline me to extend their operation. And yet the present system of school management in Ireland is such as no other country can parallel, and only historical reasons can justify or palliate. The local managers have absolute power of appointment and of dismissal of teachers, although they are not responsible for any portion of the salaries, and are merely the channels through which the State grants pass. Under the revised programme their initiative has been largely increased, and still, according to Dr. O'Dwyer, they have not received an education such as would fit them to control the course of instruction in the schools, and, as a matter of fact, they rarely interfere in matters of education. No one is better aware than I am how deeply rooted in the affections of the people are the priests, but for whom there would have been no education at all in the evil days when—

> Still crouching 'neath the shelt'ring hedge or stretched on mountain fern,
> The teacher and his pupil met feloniously to learn—

and I also am aware that, in the words of one of our inspectors, 'a good manager is a real blessing to a locality,' and that many devote to their schools an amount of time and thought they can ill spare from their multifarious duties; but it would be disingenuous to conceal the fact that our inspectors report that the majority of managers are quite indifferent to education, and that in many cases the schools are left well-nigh derelict, the only supervision given to them being that of the Board's Inspector. This neglect is demoralising to the teacher, but its ruinous effects are most discernible in the material condition of the schools. Many of them are mere hovels; even buildings recently erected, largely at the expense of the State, are described as resembling 'half-ruined tenement houses,' and the out-offices as 'dangerous sources of disease and death.' The means of heating are often 'inversely proportional to its necessity;' the most elementary claims of health and comfort are neglected. It is very painful to me, as Resident Commissioner, to make this confession; but it is difficult to suggest a remedy. If we withdraw grants from such schools the loss falls on the teacher, who is probably not to blame, and the children are deprived of their education. It is useless to appeal for help to the manager or to local subscriptions, for the Inspectors report that of local interest in education there is practically nil, and that, in return for the absolute power over school and teacher with which the managers insist on being invested, they contribute nothing in very many cases when help is most needed, but saddle the unfortunate teachers with the entire cost of maintenance. It is intolerable that such a charge should fall upon the scanty salaries of the teachers, but, unless the schools are to be allowed to tumble down over their heads, they are compelled to keep them in repair *(a)*. I may suggest that this, as well as many other educational problems in Ireland, would be simplified if the councils followed the example of every other similar body in the world, and levied a rate for the purposes of education, but it is our Irish conception of patriotism to throw upon the Treasury the whole responsibility for that which ought to be the dearest concern of any self-respecting people, and then to 'move Acheron' when we witness the

Majority of managers indifferent to education.

No local interest.

Teachers saddled with cost of repairs.

Suggest levy of rate.

(a) See Circular from National Education Commissioners in Letter XII.

inevitable consequences of local indifferences and neglect. It is generally admitted that without the local co-operation of independent and educated lay opinion the best constructed and best co-ordinated system in the world is an engine without any driving power; and so to a large extent the whole question, of which I have rashly attempted the solution, resolves itself into this—how are we to discover the independent educated layman, or to create him, if he does not yet exist? In the North we have independence without education; in the South neither independence nor education. I think we may with confidence allow the North to learn at their leisure the desirability of softening the asperities of their sturdy national character with a little of the graces of cultivation; but, as a Southerner and a Catholic, I am more concerned with the question how to discover or to create the independent and educated Catholic layman. The question is a difficult one, and gins and pitfals beset the feet of those who attempt to solve it *(b)*. And, firstly, as we are dealing with education pure and simple, we must put aside all professional men—barristers, solicitors, and medical men. They have never displayed any zeal for education, and, as they are dependent for their well-being upon the voice of the country, they simply cannot be trusted to give an unpopular vote. What we want is independent expert opinion, and it is this precisely what we have always lacked. Hitherto it has been difficult for a Catholic layman, no matter how great an expert he might be, to have a voice in Irish Education, unless he were a judge or a practising doctor. It is fruitless to look for the man we want where we should naturally expect to find him, for Dr. O'Dwyer has stated that 'almost all secondary education is in the hands of the Catholic clergy,' and that 'no laymen are competent to teach at all.' I do not agree with Mr. O'Donnell in thinking they are boycotted; they have simply not been able to live in competition with the vast multitude of celibate priests, who are 'passng rich on £40 a year.' They cannot be the head masters of Catholic schools because it is thought undesirable that these should be laymen; but they may be employed as assistants, at journeymen's wages, where there is no priest competent to do the work *(c)*. The future would seem to be equally without hope. Even in the proposed new Catholic University, in which lay influences are to predominate, it seems probable that the one post which really matters, and which in Trinity College, Dublin, and in Oxford and Cambridge Colleges, is the legitimate ambition of every brilliant Fellow may be confined to ecclesiastics "in order to command the confidence of Catholic parents." It would appear then, that, after all, I must leave the object of my essay half unattained. I have provided a central authority; but the local co-operation of educated and independent laymen in a large part of the country I can neither discover nor create. Hitherto lay learning has languished from causes which are likely to be permanent, but which must be removed, if there is to be any genuine prosperity in Ireland. Decadence and decrepitude are the inevitable destiny of a country where no inducements are offered to laymen, far from the market-place, where there is 'the buzzing of poisonous flies,' to devote themselves to those disinterested pursuits to which every country that has advanced

Dr. Starkie's Address.

Where is the independent educated Catholic layman?

Want experts.

Educated laymen cannot compete with celibate priests.

Dr. Starkie pessimistic.

Decadence and decrepitude the destiny of Ireland from exclusion of lay influence in education.

(b) Dr. Starkie seems to have little knowledge of the North. The people, professional and commercial, are quite capable of managing their educational affairs.

(c) I do not agree with Dr. Starkie—Take the case of Roman Catholic lady graduates of the Royal University. It is notorious that the power of the Church is exercised to prevent these ladies teaching independently like Protestant lady graduates. They are forced to teach in convents, i.e., in subjection to religious orders.

Dr. Starkie's Address.

civilisation owes its position; and even the interests of the Churches will not long remain unaffected, for the plain lesson of history is this, that true religion has always stood highest where learning and cultivation have not been peculiar to a caste, but have informed the whole mass; and that, where lay influences have been excluded from their proper sphere, the consequences in the long run have been fatal to the cause of religion itself."

Observations on Dr. Starkie's Address.

It is sad to think that whilst Dr. Starkie, like Mr. F. H. O'Donnell and Mr. M'Carthy, has diagnosed the disease, which is steadily sapping the vitals of the Irish race, he does not proceed like a bold surgeon to eradicate the cause. A foreign power, ultramontane Roman Catholicism, with its countless orders of celibate priests and nuns, has taken possession, and is crushing out of Education Roman Catholic laymen and women. It is seizing all the brains and money of the Irish people. In England the same power is establishing itself everywhere *(a)*.

It is as clear as noonday that if the British Government wish to have educated laymen to direct education, and, indeed, to prevent the extinction of Irish brains and the impoverishment of the Irish people, it must do what other countries have been obliged to do as a measure of self-preservation.

Italy cleared out the Religious Orders forty years ago. Germany, after the Franco-German war, took a similar measure. Switzerland, even in the Catholic Cantons, won't tolerate even the foundation of a Convent. Belgium won't allow members of the Religious Orders expelled from France either to teach or to beg. Although religious orders are tolerated in Holland, no person in the garb of a priest or Religious Order is allowed in a State school. The strictest regulations should be adopted in this country to stop the immigration of foreign Religious Orders, and the supplanting by them of lay teachers; and the Irish Religious Orders should only be allowed to continue to teach on proof of competence. In all cases laymen and laywomen should be employed in institutions supported by the State. Measures of this kind would be the natural outcome of Dr. Starkie's address. Independent lay opinion would quickly be formed by putting all primary schools under lay representative control, and the emancipation of the State paid teachers from managerial tyranny, and the making them servants of the State with fixity of tenure (See letter 12). Will he draw up a scheme? It is a strange irony of fate that Dr. Starkie, who deplores the paucity of lay educational experts, should be chiefly responsible for the new financial scheme for the payment of teachers, which will turn more and more laymen and laywomen from the teaching profession, and virtually hand over to the celibates who are passing rich on £40 a year all primary Education of Roman Catholic children.

(a) The following is a list of Male Religious Orders now established in London:—Jesuits, Berkley Square Stamford Hill, Wimbledon, and Roehampton; Marists, Leicester Square and Spitalfields; Benedictines, Great Ormond Street and Ealing; Carmelites or White Friars, Kensington; Dominicans or Black Friars, Haverstock Hill; Passionates, Highgate; Oratorians, Brompton; Servites, Fulham Road; Rosminians, Ely Place; Pallotines, Hatton Gardens; Oblates of St. Charles, Bayswater; Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Tower-hill and Kilburn; Franciscans Forest-gate; Augustinians, Hoxton; Canons Regular of the Lateran, Stroud-green; Missionaries of Divine Love, Bethnal-green; Missionaries of the Sacred Heart, Braintree; Brothers of Mercy, Walthamstow; Capuchins, Peckham; Salesians, Battersea; Carthasians, Parkminster; Christian Bros., Denmark-hill; Xaverian Brothers, Hurst-green; and Redemptorists, Clapham. The communities of women would make a list five times as large.

OBSERVATIONS ON THE MANAGEMENT OF THE EDUCATIONAL SECTION OF THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION.

I at first had not intended to take any part in the proceedings of the British Association, but some of my friends, deeply interested in education, urged me to bring my views on education before the Educational Section. I agreed to do this, and intimated a fortnight before the meeting that I would read a paper and give a lantern demonstration, showing the condition of the National Schools in Belfast. I was informed that they could not give me time for my paper, but that I might state the substance of it in the course of a general discussion. As to a lantern demonstration every obstacle was put in my way to prevent this being given, and on the most flimsy pretexts. I had taken the precaution, however, to have photos of the schools which I distributed at the meeting, and I gave a lantern demonstration in a small room, of which I was granted the use, after a great deal of trouble. The fact is, that the time of that section was monopolised and wasted by officialdom, and that no time and no opportunity was afforded for any adequate criticism of the rather remarkable doings of the various educational boards of Ireland. I was warned from a well-informed source that this would take place. The peculiar mode of management of this section raises the important question whether it is to be tolerated that a great Association for the advancement of Science should have been directed in the interests of Irish organisations that have lowered all education and forfeited all public confidence.

My paper, which I proposed to read at the British Association, will appear in the transactions of that Association; but, notwithstanding, I think it well to publish it in this pamphlet, although the majority of the views expressed will be found in my various letters. The paper is as follows:—

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE SOLUTION OF SOME DIFFICULTIES AND THE REMOVAL OF SOME DEFECTS IN ENGLISH AND IRISH PRIMARY EDUCATION.

Since the issue of the first report of the Royal Commission on University Education in Ireland my attention has been directed to primary education in Ireland, and my investigation has revealed to me a state of things totally unexpected. It has been urged that the one thing needed to complete the educational structure in Ireland was the establishment of sectarian universities. But mature consideration of the facts have shown me that University Education itself, which only affects directly a small proportion of the community, sinks into insignificance when compared with the moral and intellectual starvation of the masses of the people. I have been urged by some friends to take advantage of the opportunity afforded by the present meeting to lay before it the real state of matters, and to make certain suggestions which I hope may be worthy of consideration. Now, the National Board has been in existence for some seventy years, and has been composed of persons eminent in their own particular calling in life, and the State has gone to enormous expense, but with most unsatisfactory educational results.

I find that Parliamentary grants were received by the National Board in 1900 amounting to £1,145,721 8s, equivalent to £2 8s 5½d per child, whereas from local sources the amount was 3s 3d per child. In Scotland for the same year Parliamentary grants were received amounting to £696,607 6s 8d, being equivalent for each child from State sources to £1 2s 4d, whilst the amount contributed from rates was £1 9s 4d per child. The illiteracy of Ireland is, therefore, not owing to the parsimony of the Government, but to some other cause. The census returns do not show the real illiteracy of Ireland, for we know that illiterates of Ireland, perhaps more so than illiterates of other parts of the Kingdom, are ashamed of their illiteracy, and conceal it, whilst others who are reckoned as literates have such an imperfect primary education and cease attending school so early that they soon lose in large measure the little they learned, and for all practical purposes may be ranked with the illiterates. I think the character of the schools, the capacity of the teachers, and the nature of the management take precedence in any consideration of reforms. A remarkable fact in relation to the character of Irish primary schools is that the great majority are voluntary schools, the same as the voluntary schools of England. On the 30th September, 1899, there were 9,108 schools on the rolls, and of these 5,292 were purely voluntary schools, styled non-vested—that is to say, entirely built by Churches or private individuals at their own expense, and supposed to be kept in repair by the owners. 2,758 schools were vested in trustees, and were largely controlled by Churches, whilst 1,058 were vested in the Commissioners. To the two latter classes of schools the Commissioners contributed two-thirds of the estimated cost of building. 89 per cent. of the schools are under clerical management, and are primarily for ecclesiastical purposes, and are not designed for education. They are commonly built in places unsuitable for schools, and without due regard to light, ventilation, or sanitation. As the most effectual way of demonstrating to this Association the deplorable condition of our schools, I have had photographs taken, which I will exhibit by lantern slides at the conclusion of this discussion. These places are a disgrace to the city, and from what I learn other cities in Ireland are quite as bad. I have not had time to visit more than a few of the schools. I have only seen one really good school; there may be a few more, but I learn on excellent authority that there are very few indeed. There were recently in Belfast 248 non-vested schools, 15 vested in trustees, and 13 vested in the Commissioners. A few more have been recently built of which I have not the particulars. I condemn the Belfast schools, then, on the following grounds:—The squalor of the surroundings of many of them, the want of playgrounds, the want of classrooms, overcrowding, bad sanitary arrangements, bad ventilation, and the want of anything attractive to cause children to willingly attend. In large one-room schools, where many teachers are engaged at the same time, it is impossible to conduct school business with order, decorum, and efficiency. For the future of Belfast this question of the voluntary schools, and, indeed, of all primary schools of Belfast, is of vital importance. The question arises now in Ireland—What is to be done with these voluntary schools? Are the children of this country to be at the mercy of voluntary agencies, or is there to be an authority to provide schools, and what is that authority to be? It is my

opinion that the provision of schools should be a matter for the local authorities, and that these authorities should appoint the teachers and provide a large part of the money for the building and equipment of schools. Local control and local support will arouse interest in education. If any of the old schools should be fit places for the education of children they should be sold to the local authority at a valuation. This view has a bearing on the present English Education Bill, and that Bill may affect Ireland yet. There are 14,369 voluntary schools in England and Wales, and if the cost, as stated in Parliament by Mr. Arthur Balfour, was £26,000,000, each school would cost on an average £1,809. In other words, at a cost of, say, 3 per cent. per annum on the estimated capital value, the present Bill provides that the voluntary school managers would have absolute control of all the teachers in these schools and a mortgage practically on the brains of millions of children for a contributon of about £54 a year for each school. It has been said that £26,000,000 are invested in these schools, but the question is what are they worth? I have been informed on excellent authority that a vast number of these schools are just one-room schools, and not suitable for conducting efficiently a high-class primary education. I suggest for consideration the desirability of the Churches selling such schools as are suitable, and applying the money to provide payment for clergymen whose incomes require supplement to give religious instruction at definite times within the school hours, and in separate classrooms, or it may be in church, at stated times. The appointment of secular teachers should be made by the local authority entirely independent of the Churches. It has been done in other countries quite successfully, and it can be done in the United Kingdom. I deal now definitely with the character of the Irish schools, for it is as unreasonable to expect a first-class captain to take command of a hulk as to expect first-class teachers to teach in the ordinary Irish schools. Could anyone expect a trained German, Swiss, or American teacher to enter the great majority of these schools? To what extent the character of the teaching may be influenced by the houses in which they teach and the conditions on which they hold their appointments may be more or less judged by the classification of teachers in Ireland. I find only 46.6 per cent. of the total number of principal and assistant teachers were trained. In addition, there are 5,638 monitors, who as a rule cannot be expected to give any valuable instruction. Besides there must be 1,800 teachers in the monastery and convent schools about whom we have no information whatever. But even take the trained teachers, what guarantee is there of the sufficiency of the training? What is to be said of the untrained but that they eke out a livelihood often because they can do nothing else? What is likely to be the competence of monitors who have learned the art of teaching under untrained teachers and in the wretched hovels with which this country abounds? But the relation of the teachers to the managers would prevent independent and competent men from engaging in the teaching profession. Why should anyone holding the responsible position of a teacher be at the mercy of any one person, whether man or woman, cleric or lay, and be liable to instant dismissal without any cause assigned? It is desirable to have university graduates as teachers, and is it in accordance with reason that a teacher who sat in the same class at college with the student for another profession

English Bill mortgages teachers and children to parsons for a contribution of £54 per annum per school.

Sell Voluntary Schools and pay clergy for giving religious instruction.

should choose a position in which he would be the absolute servant of the other in after life? Why should a teacher, as a condition of appointment, be oblilged to do Church duties? If there be the inclination it is well, but there should be no compulsion. Why should teachers be obliged to beg and borrow money to keep the schools in repair and to pay caretakers? Now, in the presence of the Resident Commissioner and other gentlemen concerned in the administration of education, might I ask have they ever made inquiries as to the traffic in schools for money and other considerations? And, again, I ask is it or is it not true that inferior teachers are appointed when excellent teachers are available? Again, is it or is it not a fact that under the recent grading scheme a male principal teacher can only reach a salary of £175 per annum after 36 years of faultless service; and also, is it not a fact that when a teacher passes from an assistantship to a principalship he will only continue to receive in the higher situation the salary attached to his former position? I consider that under these circumstances it is useless to discuss the revised programme of the National Commissioners. I may say here, however, that when the programme of education has been introduced comprising hand and eye training, not for mere infants, but for more advanced pupils, and the encouragement of the study of Irish, which may be useful to university students, but is of little use to the ordinary school child, I have grave doubts about the capacity of the Board to promote primary education. It is my opinion that the programme is not adapted to lead up to scientific education in secondary schools or to prepare students for technical education. Mr. Forth, the principal of the Technical Institute in Belfast, has stated publicly that the pupils from the ordinary National Schools are not sufficiently trained to enter upon technical studies, and if there were no other reason, I consider that sufficient condemnation of our whole system of primary education.

I sum up then the suggestions which I make:—

1. The building of proper schools by or through a local authority.

2. The purchase of such voluntary schools as are suitable for modern requirements.

3. The establishment of a fund by the sale of schools under ecclesiastical control, the annual income to be devoted to the payment of clergymen for religious teaching.

4. That the secular teacher should be under a local authority or should be a State servant, and have his position secure durng good behaviour and competence.

5. That the teacher should give his whole time to his profession, and not be harassed by extraneous duties.

6. That the Legislature should declare traffic in schools corrupt and punishable.

7. That the teachers should be paid an adequate salary.

8. That teachers should be all trained.

9. That attendance should be compulsory up to fourteen or sixteen.

10. That evasion of the Act should be prevented by stringent measures, as is the rule in various highly-civilised countries.

11. That school hours should be altered, so as to promote the health of

the children, beginning at eight in summer, and nine in winter, letting children home at twelve and one respectively for dinner. Assembling them again at two or three until five or six, to prepare lessons for next day. I consider this, though a matter of detail, most important, but it would be a matter of cruelty to enforce any such rule in the present condition of such schools.

12. The present Board of Commissioners should be abolished, and a Board appointed in the interests of education and not in the interest of the sects.

Observations.

By the burking of this paper, through whatever agency accomplished, a discussion on matters of vital importance was prevented. There could not have been a more opportune occasion for the exposure of the doings of our clerically-ruled Irish Boards. For there were present an exceptionally strong attendance of persons responsible for the action of the Boards, and of persons competent to drive home the charges. There were present Commissioners of National Education, of Intermediate Education, representatives of the Technical and Agricultural Department, a large number of teachers and clerical managers, and a large number of members of the Association familiar with Educational affairs in different parts of the world. Those in authority contrived, for whatever reason, that no such discussion should take place.

Letter XI.

THE ULSTER UNIONIST MEMBERS AND THE ENGLISH EDUCATION BILL.

COMPARISON OF ENGLISH BOARD SCHOOLS AND VOLUNTARY SCHOOLS.

OBJECTIONS TO THE BILL.

INCONSISTENT ATTITUDE OF IRISH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

Ulster Unionist Members and the English Education Bill.

I cannot help expressing my astonishment at the inconsistent attitude taken by some of our Ulster members, who, notwithstanding the views of the electors, seem to be shuffling and dodging, at one time voting for the Education Bill to please the Government, and another time against it to please their constituents. It is alleged that even Mr. Sloan, who, but for his avowed uncompromising opposition to the Bill, would hardly have been returned, is now voting for that Bill. Is this true? *(a)* A little while ago it was stated that a number of the Ulster Unionist members, who first of all supported the Bill, gave notice to the Government whips that they could no longer do so because of the strong opposition to the Bill in Ulster. Some carried their opposition only so far as not to support it, but not to vote against it. That is, they were neutral. Now, it appears, if we are to believe London correspondents, that they are in a quandary, and vote with the Government if they fear the Government will be defeated. That is a charming way of opposing a Bill of paramount importance to the whole nation, brought in by the Government without any mandate from the electors. I hope the electors will clear out all these milk and water politicians. Ulster should be informed of the voting of Ulster members every day. The following is a quotation from a private letter from an eminent scholar and politician:—"Was there ever such a flock of ganders as the Ulster Unionist M.P.'s. They get the credit of being bigots, and they are really only imbeciles!" I hope that is not the prevalent view of their general capacity, but in relation to the Education Bill there is a good deal of justification for it.

Putting aside altogether the special pleading of lawyers and others who pretend to represent Unionist opinion of constituencies in Ulster, let us come to the real facts, which cannot be repeated too often:—

1st. That the Board Schools were increasing in number and efficiency ever since the passing of the Act of 1872. The following table gives particulars for twenty years:—

Comparison of Board Schools and Voluntary Schools.

Year.	Attendance at Board Schools.	Attendance at Voluntary Schools.
1881.....	856,351	2,007,184
1891.....	1,491,571	2,258,385
1900.....	2,177,253	2,488,877

(a) I am glad that Mr. Sloan has flatly contradicted this allegation, and that he has on all occasions voted against the Bill.

The Board School attendance has nearly trebled in twenty years, whereas the voluntary school attendance has only increased by about one-fourth. It appears also that the average attendance in the voluntary schools was only 120, whereas the average attendance in Board Schools was 204, and there could be no doubt that the Board Schools are efficient in almost every respect. Another fact which should be known is, that whatever is entitled to be called primary education was brought about by the Board Schools. Before the establishment of Board Schools the voluntary schools were nearly all little better than dame schools. Objections to the Bill.

2nd. That by the mere action of the natural law of the survival of the fittest these voluntary schools being the unfittest, would have been gradually closed. Indeed, had it not been for parsonical influence driving the children into them very many would have been already put out of existence. Mr. Balfour, the High Church, and the Jesuit party saw this well, and they have on one pretence or another induced large numbers of their parliamentary supporters to become traitors to their constituents. I have characterised this action before as infamous, and I see no reason to change my opinion. They should not have brought in a Bill without authority, affecting no less than the future of the 9,524,943 children estimated by the Board of Education now requiring primary education, and the millions in the years to come.

3rd. It is an abrogation of the recognised political principle that the persons who pay should rule the roost.

4th. It is against all common-sense that these bankrupt voluntary schools should have rate aid without being subject to complete ratepayer's control.

5th. It has been urged that the proprietors of these schools, which were built for Church purposes, have vested interests. I hold that they have a vested interest in the buildings, and may sell them if they like, or get power to do so by Act of Parliament, but they have no vested interest in the education of the children of the nation. The people themselves have the paramount interest, and should have paramount control. So far as I can learn in the majority of the schools the religious instruction is a mere sham, as it is in Ireland *(b)*. The clergy as a rule don't want to teach, but they want to "boss" the teachers for Church purposes.

Now I come to the remarkable position of the Presbyterian Church of the North of Ireland, and I hope it will not be forgotten at the next election. The Church—and I refer specially to the clergy—has not acted like the Presbyterian Church of Scotland or America. It has been shouting about non-sectarian education, but, in fact, it has promoted its petty schools in sectarian interests, and yet passes resolutions against the English Education Bill. I recently met an eminent Presbyterian clergyman who has had a good deal to do with education, and I hope he has reason to be pleased with the result of his labours. He said to me—"Dr. M'Keown, how are you getting on with your agitation for popular control of primary education?" I said—"I am doing the best I can to give people information. They really don't know the deplorable state of affairs. I think I have made some progress." He replied—"You will never succeed, because no Government would dare to propose to Inconsistant Attitude of Irish Presbyterian Church.

(b) See extracts from letters from two able and experienced teachers which will be found in the Appendix.

give local control in the South and West." I said—"Do you mean to say for a moment that we in Ulster are to have the clerical halter round our necks if the people of the other provinces are so foolish as to bear it?" I consider this short interview explains a vast deal, and indicates that the laity have no reason to trust the clergy generally in the North of Ireland on this question. They wish to keep the "grip of the schools," as a Presbyterian clergyman said at a meeting of Assembly some years ago. It is an insult to the Presbyterian people. It is an insult likewise to the Roman Catholic laity. Why should they not have popular control of education? I know that some county and borough councils have been acting most ignorantly and corruptly, but formerly people in a higher social position acted quite as badly. Time will cure this. The criminal law, if Dublin Castle were honest enough to do its duty, would soon end the corruption. Another incident told me by a head teacher of a school not under clerical management is very striking. A clergyman of a suburban church met this teacher in a tramcar or railway train, and said to him, "Do you think Mr. —— you will ever succeed in getting popular control?" and added in the course of the conversation, "You never will, for the Roman Catholics will prevent you." In other words, it indicates that some of the members of the Presbyterian Church act the cowardly part of sheltering themselves behind Roman Catholics, and they let the Roman Catholic Church fight the battle of sectarianism, and then sneak in to get a sectarian dole for themselves. Why don't they come out and fight their own battle if they want the continuance of the present pernicious clerical control of primary education? A correspondent in one of the Belfast papers recently brought out clearly that one reason why the Presbyterian Churches wished so much to have non-vested schools was that the clerical manager wanted to use the school for mission and other Church purposes, which he could not do in a vested school. But there is another obvious reason, however—viz., to have a body of really clerically-ruled assistants—in fact, sort of curates to be used for Church purposes without paying them. I learn on the best authority from various sources that the schoolrooms are generally used for the most various purposes, as, for instance, boys' brigades, Good Templar lodges, gymnasia, girls' friendly meetings, flute bands, choir meetings, prayer meetings, Sunday schools. I learn about one school that "the floors are very often saturated with tobacco juice, and that the atmosphere is frequently in an awful state." And such a place is called a school! The Board of Commissioners pretend to want university graduates as teachers. I wonder what sort of university graduate would undertake teaching in any school with such multifarious and menial duties. Although I have dealt so largely with the Presbyterian Church and its offences, because they have come so prominently before me, it is not to be forgotten that practically the same charges may be brought against the Church of Ireland—the only saving point about the Church of Ireland being that it does not pretend so much. I hope to deal in my next letter with the gross neglect of their own rules and regulations by the Commissioners of National Education.—Your obedient servant,

Strange Uses of a School.

William A. M'Keown.

20, College Square E., Belfast,
8th November.

Letter XII.

BREACH AND NEGLECT BY THE COMMISSIONERS OF NATIONAL EDUCATION OF THEIR OWN RULES AND REGULATIONS.

DESPERATE PLIGHT OF BELFAST IN RELATION TO ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS.

SUGGESTIONS FOR REFORM OF THE NATIONAL SYSTEM OF EDUCATION.

In considering the doings of an administrative body it is necessary to bear in mind that, if the administrators have a single eye to carrying out thoroughly the main object for which they have been appointed, they can manage and contrive to make very imperfect and unsatisfactory rules and regulations very effective; whilst administrators of an opposite character, and who are guided by other considerations, may contrive and manage so as to make the most excellent rules and regulations an instrument to thwart and destroy the intention of the Legislature. Under which of these classes the Commissioners of Education should be ranged I will leave the reader to decide after I have stated the facts. The first and second rules of the Commissioners of National Education explain the object and fundamental principle of the system of Irish National Education.

Rule 1—"The object of the system of National Education is to afford combined literary and moral, and separate religious, instruction to children of all persuasions, as far as possible, in the same school, upon the fundamental principle that no attempt shall be made to interfere with the peculiar religious tenets of any description of Christian pupils.

Rule 2—"It is the earnest wish of Her Majesty's Government, and of the Commissioners, that the clergy and laity of the different religious denominations should co-operate in conducting National Schools."

The facts disclosed show that the Commissioners so far from promoting the objects of the National system of combined secular and separate religious instruction have been doing their best to keep the children of different denominations altogether separate from each other in the most wretched hovels, rather than, by timely advice and warning, giving the people to understand that the interests of education required large schools, with different grades of teachers, with various class-rooms in which separate religious instruction could have been conducted with the greatest ease. The reports of the Inspectors in every part of Ireland point out the great evil from the multiplication of these petty schools. The same system still continues with all its disastrous results to education. Indeed, it is not a matter of denominational schools, but a petty place called a school as an appendage to each Church. A firm and able Board would have educated the people, and have carried out a thorough educational policy under the present defective rules.

Commissioners thwart intention of Legislature.

Absolute power of Commissioners and their neglect.

Rule 11—"The Commissioners reserve to themselves in all cases, in vested as well as in non-vested schools, the right to refuse or withdraw any grant of salary whenever they see fit." This rule is the most important of all the rules, and fixes the responsibility on the Commissioners for all their neglect in carrying out the great trust committed to them by Act of Parliament. They have absolute and irresponsible power over education, and if they have not exercised that power in the interests of education there can be for them no palliation or excuse. It will not do to say if they had done so and so they would have been obliged to close an insanitary school, or that they would have been obliged to dismiss an incompetent teacher, or that a district would have been left without education for some time. They could have called the attention of the Government to these things, and provided a remedy. It was unwarrantable and totally against the public interest to go on for seventy years not only winking at, but, I fear, sometimes conniving at and promoting gross abuses. It is pertinent to ask what influence was at work to make the Commissioners of Education for the last seventy years forget their duty as reported by their Inspectors.

Failure to enforce duty on trustees.

Rule 27 (a) "When the school premises are vested in trustees, it is the duty of such trustees to keep the house and furniture in repair." The reports of the Inspectors prove that the Commissioners have not enforced this duty on trustees, and that, although the State has contributed two-thirds of the cost of all these vested schools, the Commissioners have allowed the school premises, in which the State has such a large interest, to fall habitually into great disrepair and to become in some instances practically derelict. They have not shown themselves trustworthy as protectors of what is practically State property. Any private person in like circumstances would, I am sure, be mulcted in heavy damages for neglect of duty. What would the public say if the Admiralty let the navy go to the dogs as the Commissioners of National Education have done with the schools? How is it that the legal members of the Board, and there have always been plenty of them, did not see that the trustees kept the schools in good repair? Good healthy schools are an essential in any good system of education. Further, I may ask why it is, if the patron or manager was so neglectful of the condition of the school they did not exercise the power reserved to them under Rule 107 (a), which is as follows:—"The Commissioners also reserve to themselves the power of withdrawing the recognition of a patron, or of a local manager if he shall fail to observe the rules of the Board, or if it shall appear to them that the educational interests of the district require it." If the Commissioners exercised their power at the present time they would wipe out three-fourths at any rate of the managers in Ireland, for they neither keep the schools in repair nor promote the educational interests of the people in the smallest degree.

Non-vested schools.

Now, the non-vested schools stand in a peculiar position. They are private property. They are almost all owned by Churches, and as photos. I exhibited at the meeting of the British Association show, they are most dissimilar and remarkable in character. It seems everybody can do whatever he likes, and call any structure or any room anywhere a school, and get a teaching supply from the Board paid by the money of the State. The persons who promote these schools

seem to resent any criticism of the appearance, situation, surroundings, or anything else about the schools, but these are public institutions, a proper subject of criticism, and it is not enough to say, "We have done something we need not have done," and I answer though these persons may be thanked for what they have done, these institutions are anachronisms, which might have done 200 years ago, but are totally unsuited to these times, and must be wiped out in the public interest. It is to be remarked that, although non-vested schools are private property, under Rule 11, the Commissioners have perfect power to enforce sanitary arrangement and educational efficiency through their power of stopping supplies.

Perfect power of Commissioners over them.

There is a clause under Rule 12, relating to vested schoolhouses as follows:—"That before any grant is made towards building a schoolhouse the Commissioners must be satisfied," among other things, "that when the school comes into operation adequate local aid will be provided in augmentation of the teacher's emoluments from the Board." I had thought, and I expect any rational person would think, that after school fees had been practically abolished in Ireland that this clause had come to be nullified, but it seems to be alive yet, as appears from a memorandum issued by the Commissioners of Education in September, 1899. "The Commissioners grant aid to National Schools on condition that the local parties interested in the welfare of the schools will make provision to supplement the teacher's emoluments from the Board, and it is not too much to expect, in view of the fact that the vast majority of National Schools have been made free schools by an Act of the Legislature, that the parents of the children and other local parties interested in education will contribute the funds necessary for the suitable maintenance of schoolhouses, and arrange for keeping them properly heated in winter without encroaching on the salaries of the teachers." Are the Commissioners compos mentis, or are they really living in dreamland? Are they not aware that there is no hope under the present system, where people have no control, that they will supplement the incomes of the teachers? What hope is there of managers finding money for the repair of schoolhouses, unless by legal compulsion or pressure by the Board? In fact is it reasonable to expect they would? Surely the Commissioners know that it is the unfortunate teachers who are obliged out of their own means and by begging and borrowing, and giving concerts and getting up small sales of work to keep the schoolhouses going at all. In the same memorandum the Commissioners say—"It having come to the knowledge of the Board that a practice has arisen in certain parts of Ireland of requiring teachers as a condition of appointment to National Schools to contribute towards the expenses of the maintenance of their schools out of their salaries, the Commissioners wish to impress upon managers and members of school committees that they regard such a practice as entirely contrary to the spirit of their rules and regulations." The Commissioners ought to know that this is a common practice in all parts of Ireland, but in consequence of the autocratic rule of the managers over teachers the latter are afraid to complain, for instant dismissal would probably be their fate; but teachers holding office no matter for what period are obliged to make repairs on threat of dismissal. Then in the same memorandum there is the following passage:—"Under no circumstances, however, can the Commissioners sanction the levying of money from teachers, directly or indirectly, as a

A belated circular from the Commissioners.

Warning to managers against imposition of expense of maintenance on teachers.

Warning against levying money from teachers on appointment.

condition of appointment to National Schools, or of continuance in appointments in National Schools, and they will have seriously to consider should any such cases again come before them whether they will not withdraw their grants from the schools where such imposts are permitted by the managers." This memorandum is quite too polite, and leads to false impressions. The managers doubtless understand it, but the public would not. "Imposts permitted by managers" should read "imposts levied by managers." One may ask in reading this have these Commissioners any knowledge of the world whatever? There cannot be a doubt that appointments are regularly made for monetary and other considerations and not for competence.

I know of an instance of the sale of a school from one clerical manager to another clerical manager, and the teachers, just like common chattels, were disposed of and were transferred from the Church of clerical manager No. 1 to the Church of clerical manager No. 2. How can it be expected that teachers occupying the semi-menial position of national teachers will make charges against their masters when certain dismissal would follow, and every clerically-managed school in Ireland would be shut against them?

The National Board is clearly to be charged with an attempt to fix the impost for keeping the schools in order more securely on the teachers instead of trying to relieve them. I have before me a circular signed by the two secretaries, and dated August, 1902, which reads as follows:—

Circular from Commissioners threatening penalty on teachers if schools not kept clean.

"Circular to managers and teachers of National Schools. It is important to take notice that when the question of grant or disallowance of triennial increments of teachers' continued good service salaries is under consideration, the inspectors' reports as to the neatness and cleanliness of the schoolhouse and premises will constitute a very important element." This is putting a screw on the teachers, as it is well known the managers as a rule do not pay for keeping the schools clean. The head teacher of a large school with many assistants showed me a block of a cheque for £12 paid to the sexton of a Church for keeping the school clean for a year. Another told me he paid £6 a year. It will be found almost a universal rule for the teachers to pay.

Over-crowding and insanitary condition of Dublin schools.

Whilst writing this letter I have received from the Dublin Sanitary Association, whose committee includes some of the chief citizens of Dublin, their report for the year 1901, which contains an indictment against the Commissioners not only of ignorance, but of the most positive obstinacy and obstruction to any measure for improving the sanitary condition of the elementary schools in Dublin. That Report contains the following:—"Your Council, during the past year, have given considerable attention to the sanitary condition of, and overcrowding in, the National Schools within the city. This is a subject the seriousness of which cannot be overestimated. If the future is to be an advance on the present, if our people are to progress in health, cleanliness, morality, and everything which conduces to make life more bearable, it is in the schools that efforts towards these ends will meet with most success. The surroundings of children have a very permanent effect for better or for worse, in moulding their after lives. It is, therefore, essential that National Schools should be in the best possible sanitary condition. The Committee appointed in 1900 by the Local Government Board

for Ireland to inquire into the public health of the city recognising the importance of the subject, carefully examined into the state of the schools. Their report reveals that much remains to be done to bring these establishments up to the standard of modern requirements, and they made the following recommendations towards effecting this object:—(a) That a sufficient amount of floor space and cubic space should be provided in all instances; (b) that a sufficient area of playground should be provided in each case; (c) that instruction should be given in the elementary rules of hygiene; (d) that the present hours of attendance should be altered so as to allow a proper interval for recreation and food between morning school and afternoon school; (e) that every school should have adequate sanitary accommodation and a sufficient number of lavatory basins properly equipped." One would have supposed that the representations of the council of this Association would have received some attention, but the correspondence which is appended to the report, and which consists of some thirty-two different letters, passing between the Association, the Local Government Board, the Health Committee of the Dublin Corporation, and the Board of National Education, and extending from the 12th October, 1900, to the 28th December, 1901, shows that the National Board took no steps whatever to improve the condition of the schools, notwithstanding pressure brought to bear by the Local Government Board, by the Dublin Corporation, and by the Association. The correspondence finishes with a letter from the Secretary of the National Board to the Secretary of the Dublin Sanitary Association in which the following passage occurs:—"Sir—In reply to your letter of the 20th inst., I am directed to state that defects in the sanitation of National Schools or infringement of the regulations laid down on the subject, when reported to this office are brought under the notice of the managers concerned, as non-vested schoolhouses and houses vested in trustees are not the property of my Board. In the case of schools vested in the Commissioners the attention of the department of public works may also be called to the matter."

Recommendation by Local Government Board regarding Dublin Schools.

From the whole correspondence it would appear that the Dublin Corporation are entitled to credit for trying to do something to give information, as it issued to the managers of schools the recommendations of the Local Government Board. The Commissioners of National Education deserve the strongest censure for their utter disregard of the health and lives of the teachers and pupils in these places called schools, and any competent Government would dismiss them. Their letter is a mere playing with words. They have the drastic remedy in their hands of striking the school off the roll, dismissing the managers, and stopping the salaries of teachers. What more power do they require? The Commissioners, however, whilst disregarding their own rules and regulations, and allowing their powers to lie in abeyance, might have some counterbalancing good deeds in their favour, but I fail to find one.

Disregard by National Board of Education of recommendations of L.G.B.

What a mess these sectarian Commissioners have got us into in Ireland! Taking Belfast alone, I am informed by a gentleman, until recently in charge under the Board of Works of the Public Works of the North of Ireland, including schools, that there are not 10 per cent, of schools in Belfast fit places for education. I see Dr. Spence had a bazaar lately for the extension and improvement of St. Mary's

Plight of Belfast schools.

schools. Now, if there were a bazaar every month to replace, improve, or extend, and provide with suitable playgrounds the 270 schools condemned by this gentleman, bazaars and begging would have to go on for 22½ years. A proposition to put the elementary schools of Belfast on a sound basis by means of voluntary subscriptions, bazaars, and begging is too laughable to be entertained. The Corporation, aided by the State, is the only body capable of undertaking a task of such magnitude; besides, this does not take into account the additional accommodation now necessary for the children for whom no accommodation is now provided, and for the large prospective increase of the population.

Suggestions for reform.

Now, what is the remedy? I would say:—

1st. Abolish this National Board, the root of the whole evil.

2nd. Abolish altogether the present managerial system.

3rd. The national teachers, being paid by the State, should be emancipated by the State from their present thraldom, and at once given an independent position as State servants, just like the Prussian teacher. In this way there would be established at once in every corner of Ireland a body of public servants devoted to the State, and with a loyalty born of freedom and protection.

4th. That a Board of Education should be established, consisting of, say, four educational lay experts familiar with the educational systems of the world, one representing each province. There should also be an additional Commissioner, a foreigner, acquainted practically with, say, the Swiss system, in which the Roman Catholic and Protestant interests are involved, with a chairman, who should be the Minister of Education for Ireland. In connection with that Board there should be a school architect add a medical doctor as the hygienic authority. All the schools of Ireland should be inspected and reported upon by architects, and their reports submitted to the architect of the Board.

5th. That the local control of education should be in the hands of the city, urban, and county councils.

6th. That the schools should be supported by State aid and rates in such proportion as should be determined.

7th. Attendance at school should be compulsory all over Ireland, and any interference by any person, cleric or lay, to prevent such attendance should be regarded as a grave offence against the rights of the citizens, and punishable by fine and imprisonment.

To my mind such a scheme as this, or one analogous, is necessary to bring primary education up to the level of modern requirements.—Your obedient servant,

WILLIAM A. M'KEOWN.

20, College Square E., Belfast,
15th November, 1902.

Belfast National Schools.

The first eight prints represent the external appearance and surroundings of National Schools in the City of Belfast. I might have multiplied my illustrations indefinitely, for there are thousands of schools in Ireland not one whit better than these. Plate IX. represents the interior of a large school, with crowds of children, taught in one class-room by various teachers, a condition totally against efficient education. Plate X. represents a class-room, the dimensions of which are—length, 21 feet; breadth, 8 feet; and height, 12 feet, in a relatively good school. There are 36 children in this class-room. There would be, therefore, 56 cubic feet of space for each child, that is about one-tenth of what each child ought to have, even with efficient ventilation.

PLATE I.

PLATE II.

PLATE III.

PLATE IV.

PLATE V.

PLATE VI.

PLATE VII.

PLATE VIII.

PLATE IX

PLATE X.

American Schools.

My space and time do not admit of giving representations of the schools of various countries. Plates XI., XII., XIII., XIV. are American schools. Plate eleven represents a modern primary school of N.Y. City, and plate twelve a covered school play-ground. The next two engravings, copied from a City Report, dated 1888, represent two schools in the small Western City of Alleghany. There were then 18 schools in all of the same sort for a school population of about 15,000.

PLATE XI.

PLATE XII.

PLATE XIII.

PLATE XIV.

English Board Schools.

The following Plates XV., XVI., XVII., XVIII., XIX., XX. represent Board Schools in Manchester. Some of them are purely primary schools, others a combination of primary and high-grade schools, and others purely high-grade schools.

PLATE XV.

PLATE XVI.

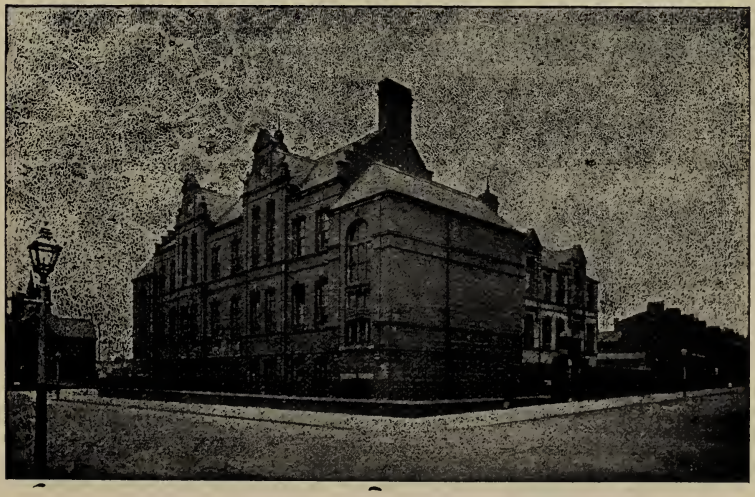

PLATE XVII.

PLATE XVIII.

PLATE XIX.

PLATE XX.

APPENDIX.

I am sorry that the most of the letters contained in this Appendix are anonymous. The reasons are obvious. As a rule, the teachers dare not sign their names, and the "Irish Roman Catholic" was not likely able to take the independent position of Mr. F. H. O'Donnell or Mr. M'Carthy.

LETTER ON UNSANITARY NATIONAL SCHOOLS IN BELFAST, BY "A DISCIPLE OF KINGSLEY," WHICH APPEARED IN "BELFAST NEWS-LETTER" OF 24TH FEBRUARY, 1902.

SIR—When I read Dr. M'Keown's letter in your issue of the 20th inst., I thanked heaven that I had lived to find that even one man in the city either knew or cared about the appalling state of the National Schools of Belfast. But Dr. M'Keown only touched on the question of over-crowding. I had been a teacher for many years in one of these over-crowded schools, and would like to give you my experience of it. The want of common decency in the matter of cleaning the schoolrooms and the outside premises could hardly be credited. The caretaker too often deputes the work of cleaning to a couple of children, who are utterly unfit for it; the floors are only washed once a year, and even then not too well. The desks and furniture are disgustingly sticky and dirty; the windows are never cleaned, the chimneys smoke dreadfully, the outside premises are an outrage to the senses of sight and smell, and I have known teachers to risk a serious illness rather than venture into them. Often there is no water about the school premises either for drinking or flushing purposes. The children break the water-tap, and then it is turned off at the main to avoid a summons from the Water Commissioners till the tap is mended again. There is accommodation for the clothing of about the tenth of the number of children attending the school. The rest of the clothing is piled up on the floor or on forms, and on a wet day the stench from this pile of steaming clothing is sickening. There is no daily inspection of the pupils as to cleanliness, the light is bad, and the ventilation imperfect. The manager (a clergyman) takes nothing to do with the cleanliness or uncleanliness of the schools. I have no doubt he preaches and believes that "cleanliness is next to godliness." But why—oh! why—does he not see that this is carried out in the schools of which he is called "the manager?" The parish is a large though not a poor one, and perhaps the clergyman has too many other duties to allow him to attend to the schools as he should, but, if so, he should hand over the management to someone who can spare

the time, and would really "manage" the schools. Under the circumstances, I have no hesitation in saying that this manager is responsible, in the sight of God and man, for the misery and ill-health of the teachers and pupils in his schools, for his attention has been called to the matter repeatedly. The sanitary inspector comes in sometimes—not often. I don't think he ever came in when the outside premises were without water, but whether he does not notice the foul air, the over-crowding, and the dirty floors, or, noticing, fails to report, I know not; but, this I do know, that no improvement in the state of affairs has ever been the result of the vigilance of the sanitary inspector. Then the parents, the working people of Belfast, do not seem to be aware that they have a right and ought to see the premises in which their children spend the most important years of their lives—the years in which their constitutions are either made or marred for life, and not theirs only, but of the generation to follow. In all the years I have been teaching, I was only once asked by a mother how it was that her children always came home from school with headaches or sick, and why their underclothing was almost black on the second or third day after it was put on. I told her the truth, that the state of the school was responsible for both. She said she would see the manager about it, but I never heard anything more about the matter, and the children still attend school. The lassitude and sluggishness of the children, of which Dr. M'Keown speaks, and which is often mistaken for stupidity, is one of the hardest things a teacher has to combat in school, especially as the teacher is also suffering from it. I know there are a few schools in the city that are really models of what a National School should be, and they are such because the managers are models also. Generally speaking, I think it a mistake to have clerical managers of schools. They have not the business-like ways and system of the ordinary layman, who has got a good commercial training, and who would put reason and common-sense before sentiment, and dismiss a slovenly caretaker, even though she has a drunken husband and large family, rather than let hundreds suffer by her neglect of duty. I heartily agree with "G. M." in his letter of Saturday regarding the abolition of mixed schools. The "rough and tumble" contact of the sexes in these schools has the tendency to destroy that deference for the weaker sex among the boys, and that delicacy of feeling and modesty in the girls, which ought to be fostered, not destroyed, in the rising generation, which we all admired in bygone generations, and which only can enable Ireland to continue to point proudly to the "chastity of her women and the bravery of her men." I trust that this correspondence will have the effect of rousing those whose duty it is to remedy this disastrous state of affairs in schools to a sense of their long-neglected duty. If teachers cannot be decently paid by the Commissioners of National Education, at least let them be decently housed during the thirty hours per week of teaching, and not compelled to live in surroundings in which only a pig would be happy. I conclude by reiterating Dr. M'Keown's remarks, that, "under the circumstances indicated above, apathy and inaction on the part of the Corporation and people (and I would add managers) would be nothing short of criminal."—I am, sir, yours truly,

A Disciple of Kingsley.

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER BY MR. DAVID ELLIOTT, B.A., DATED 23RD SEPTEMBER, 1902, WHICH APPEARED IN "BELFAST NEWS-LETTER."

Referring to the managerial abuses of power in the appointment and dismissal of teachers he says:—"It has been grossly abused to the detriment not only of the teachers but of education. I look on the abuse in the appointment as worse than in the dismissal of teachers. I can explain what I mean by a particular case. Some time ago a young man applied for a school. The manager laid down his duties thus:—(1) Attend Church twice on Sunday; (2) Teach in Sunday school every week; (3) Assist at Band of Hope; (4) Assist at Young Men's Society; (5) Attend prayer-meeting every Wednesday; (6) Attend Communion regularly. This appointment was conditional on his performing these duties to the satisfaction of the manager. In some schools, in addition to such duties, teachers are compelled to pay exorbitant sums to Church funds. Is it any wonder the manager should shield an inefficient teacher under such circumstances? I shall only add there is an opportunity in Ireland for zealous reformers without going to England."

EXTRACT FROM LETTER IN "NORTHERN WHIG" OF 2ND MAY, 1902.

"There are managerial maladministrations. There are teachers who have been obliged to lavishly bribe managers to obtain their appointments. There are instances where a certain percentage of the teacher's salary has to be deposited in the manager's coffer. And there are an innumerable number of cases where the teacher is subjected to so many petty annoyances and treated with such discourtesy that his life becomes a burden. Why should anyone have the right to appoint and dismiss an officer whom he does not pay, and that without being responsible to any person or body of persons for what he has done?

There can never be real reform in Irish Education so long as the priests', rectors', and ministers' schools exist in every village. The amount of State aid is not, and cannot be, inexhaustible. It has reached its possible climax. All lovers of learning should like to see it expended in the best way for the children of the nation. But the existing plan of supporting a school for every congregation is the worst conceivable."—Yours &c.,

(Signed) AN OLD TEACHER.

CLERICAL MANAGEMENT.

To the Editor of the "Northern Whig."

SIR—The address on Irish Education recently delivered by Mr. M. J. F. M'Carthy in Dublin, and published in your issue of the 19th inst., deserves the careful consideration of all Irishmen, irrespective of creed, political opinions, or

social status. Mr. M'Carthy informs us that the Roman Catholic clerical managers have the patronage of some £1,433,477.

I propose, with your permission, to give a few instances of the manner in which this patronage is dispensed in a Western county in one of the most Catholic districts in Ireland, or perhaps in the world, and where probably ninety-nine per cent. of the school managers are parish priests.

It is now a recognised fact in this country that situations in National Schools are sold to the highest bidder, just as effectually as if knocked down by a regular auctioneer in the open market, and with little or no regard to the educational qualifications of the purchasers. The results of this system, I need scarcely add, are most disastrous to the pupils. In many instances assistant and even principal teachers are not only untrained and incompetent, but also lacking in independence, manliness, and self-respect, attributes in a teacher which profoundly affect his pupils when they grow up and begin to face and experience the realities of life.

A couple of years ago I was spending a few weeks in the West, where a most curious case was brought to my notice, which illustrates in some measure the manner in which the clerical manager dispenses his patronage. The priest of the parish was being promoted to a better living, and the unfortunate teachers made a joint effort to recover their money before his departure. I understand the amount claimed was about £200. The priest promised to pay them at a certain inn on the day of his departure, but by a flank movement, which would have done credit to the commander of an army corps, he successfully evaded them. His reverence was also in the habit of commandeering any good fowls belonging to his parishioners which he happened to cast his eye on, and especially those belonging to families whose children aspired to the rank and dignity of teachers. It was indeed a painful sight to me to observe the poor peasantry hiding their fowls when their parish priest was about to pass their dwellings.

The manner in which the principal bribe is usually administered is very ingenious, and worthy of notice. The *modus operandi* is to invite the priest to offer up the sacrifice of the mass at the house of the person who wants to purchase a school. When leaving he receives the bribe (sometimes amounting to over £50), ostensibly as a gift for offering the mass. Nor does the matter end there, because the incompetent teacher requires managerial assistance against adverse reports of Government Inspectors, and of course this affords another opportunity for "gifts" from the unfortunate victims. Young teachers of ability, who are unwilling to pay the price or submit to the degradation which this traffic entails, leave the country and seek elsewhere that common justice and fair play which are denied them at home by clerical managers. Their valuable services are thus lost for ever to their country.

Even when parents recognise that their children are being handicapped in the struggle for existence, owing to the defective education received under this infamous system, they are afraid to protest. "Shure it is unlucky to have any row with the priest," is the invariable reply if you ask why the people do not protest and sweep

I could give several other instances of the unjust use the priest makes of his

patronage did space permit. If these clerics cannot manage a simple National School without indulging in this kind of traffic, how can they be expected to manage a Catholic University? As an Irish Catholic this is a rather painful subject for me to discuss, but I feel I am doing a good work in letting a little wholesome light and the free breath of public opinion play on the working of a system of patronage which is as repulsive and iniquitous in the sight of all fair-minded men as any which obtains in the land of the "heathen Chinee."—Yours, &c.

AN IRISH ROMAN CATHOLIC.

24th October, 1901.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS TO ME FROM TWO ABLE AND EXPERIENCED NATIONAL SCHOOL TEACHERS ON THE RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN NATIONAL SCHOOLS.

EXTRACT FROM LETTER No. 1 ON RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION.

The present unsatisfactory condition of Primary Education is the result of the pretended anxiety of clergymen to promote the religious training of the young. It might, therefore, be expected that the defects which exist in the secular department would be more than counterbalanced by the spiritual benefits conferred on the pupils. In justification of the ruin of secular education, it is always considered necessary at Synods of the Church of Ireland to inform the public that great progress has been made by the pupils in religious knowledge, and that a corresponding improvement has resulted in their spiritual condition. But every Protestant National Teacher knows that what is called Religious Education is religious in nothing except the name it bears.

Notwithstanding all the importance which a clergyman professes to attach to Religious Education, he considers he has fully discharged his duty when he assigns a programme of instruction to be mastered, and sends an inspector once a year to test the teacher's industry and faithfulness. It is not surprising that the instruction imparted under such conditions aims no higher and accomplishes no more than to cram the pupils with a number of ready-made answers sufficient to enable them to pass an examination. The children acquire a verbal acquaintance with the language and definitions of sacred subjects, their memory is burdened with Biblical names and liturgical intricacies, but there is no attempt made to train them to be devotional or God-fearing, while the information is forgotten when it has served its purpose at the examination. Presbyterian teachers have informed me that the religious instruction imparted to the children of that Church is similar to that I have just described, and that Presbyterian clergymen are as careless of the spiritual welfare of the young as are those of the Church of Ireland. Religious instruction is really a farce and a fraud, and yet it is to maintain this imposture that the education of generations of our countrymen is sacrificed and their prospects in life blighted.

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EXTRACT FROM LETTER No. 2 ON RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION.

I have been for a long time so impressed with the artificial method by which religious instruction is conducted in our National Schools that I cannot help comparing it to St. Paul's "sounding brass and tinkling cymbal." We sometimes find a teacher before a class, beating time with a pointer on a black board, teaching the children to say the names of the twelve Apostles, in groups like this—"Peter, Andrew, James, and John" ("four at a time, boys")—tap, tap, tap, tap—"Peter, Andrew, James, and John"—tap, tap, &c. while the children would be as intelligently employed in repeating—ta-la-la—ta-la-la.

Some time ago, a well-meaning examiner assured an assistant of mine that he would pass every one of a junior class of fifty or sixty—for, id he, "they have said the Lord's Prayer in such good time."

A short time after the famous "Results' System" was introduced into Ireland, the plan was copied by some of our Churches in the matter of Religious Instruction in National Schools. For a time small results' fees were actually paid for passes in religious knowledge; but, as the funds were required for more urgent purposes, that item in the scheme soon died from exhaustion. The system, however, still continues—minus the fees—and thus religion is measured out in quantity, in the same manner as other branches of knowledge were, under the pernicious "Results' System," that has just departed this life.

Annual examinations are held, at which the children are subjected to a series of questions, which, if cleverly answered, entitles the child to a certificate, and the school to credit as a promoter of religion, though the questions might be answered best by the worst child in the community. A boy is scarcely likely to grow up to be a better man because he can answer glibly such questions as these—"How were Adam and Eve kept from returning to Eden?" "How many years did Methuselah live?" "Who was the first worker in brass and iron?" "What happened in the land of Shinar?" (a difficult question), &c., &c., &c.

This dark side of the question is never dwelt upon in the flourishing annual reports that appear from time to time in the newspapers.

If the managers, who are mostly clergymen, would take the religious instruction of the young into their own hands, they would find the material capable of being moulded by being dealt with in a rational manner.

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